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"'*I am the Colonel Sahib's son and* ***my*** *order is that you go at once! You black men are frightening the Miss Sahib.*'"

WEE WILLIE WINKIE—Vol. 1., p. 388.

SELECTED WORKS

OF

RUDYARD KIPLING

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SOLDIERS THREE

A Collection of Stories setting forth certain passages in the Lives and Adventures of Privates Terence Mulvaney, Stanley Ortheris, and John Learoyd

IN BLACK AND WHITE

THE STORY OF THE GADSBYS

A TALE WITHOUT A PLOT

THE PHANTOM 'RICKSHAW

AND OTHER TALES

WEE WILLIE WINKIE

AND OTHER CHILD STORIES

PR
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1900
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Volume One

NEW YORK

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PREFACE

THIS small book contains, for the most part, the further adventures of my esteemed friends and sometime allies, Privates Mulvaney, Ortheris, and Learoyd, who have already been introduced to the public. Those anxious to know how the three most cruelly maltreated a member of Parliament; how Ortheris went mad for a space; how Mulvaney and some friends took the town of Lungtungpen; and how little Jhansi McKenna helped the regiment when it was smitten with cholera, must refer to a book called "Plain Tales from the Hills." I would have reprinted the four stories in this place, but Dinah Shadd says that "tearin' the tripes out av a book wid a pictur' on the back, all to make Terence proud past reasonin'," is wasteful, and Mulvaney himself says that he prefers to have his fame "dishpersed most notoriously in sev'ril volumes." I can only hope that his desire will be gratified.

RUDYARD KIPLING.

SOLDIERS THREE

THE GOD FROM THE MACHINE

Hit a man an' help a woman, an' ye can't be far wrong any ways.
—*Maxims of Private Mulvaney*

THE Inexpressibles gave a ball. They borrowed a seven-pounder from the Gunners, and wreathed it with laurels, and made the dancing-floor plate-glass, and provided a supper, the like of which had never been eaten before, and set two sentries at the door of the room to hold the trays and programme cards. My friend, Private Mulvaney, was one of the sentries, because he was the tallest man in the regiment. When the dance was fairly started the sentries were released, and Private Mulvaney fled to curry favor with the mess sergeant in charge of the supper. Whether the mess sergeant gave, or Mulvaney took, I cannot say. All that I am certain of is that, at supper-time, I found Mulvaney with Private Ortheris, two-thirds of a ham, a loaf of bread, half a paté de foie gras, and two magnums of champagne, sitting on the roof of my carriage. As I came up I heard him saying:

"Praise be a danst doesn't come as often as ord'ly-room, or, by this an' that, Orth'ris, me son, I wud be the dishgrace av the rig'mint instid av the brightest jool in uts crown."

"*Hand* the colonel's pet noosince," said Ortheris, who was a Londoner. "But wot makes you curse your rations? This 'ere fizzy stuff's good enough."

"Stuff, ye oncivilized pagin! 'Tis champagne we're dhrinkin' now. 'Tisn't that I am set ag'in. 'Tis the quare stuff wid the little bits av black leather in it. I misdoubt I will be distressin'ly sick wid it in the mornin'. Fwhat is ut?"

"Goose liver," I said, climbing on the top of the carriage, for I knew that it was better to sit out with Mulvaney than to dance many dances.

"Goose liver, is ut?" said Mulvaney. "Faith, I'm thinkin' thim that makes it wud do betther to cut up the colonel. He carries a power av liver undher his right arrum whin the days are warm an' the nights chill. He wud give thim tons an' tons av liver. 'Tis he sez so. 'I'm all liver today,' sez he; an' wid that he ordhers me ten days C. B. for as moild a dhrink as iver a good sodger tuk betune his teeth."

"That was when 'e wanted for to wash 'isself in the fort ditch," Ortheris explained. "Said there was too much beer in the barrack water-butts for a God-fearing man. You was lucky in gittin' orf with wot you did, Mulvaney."

"You say so? Now I'm pershuaded I was cruel hard trated, seein' fwhat I've done for the likes av him in the days whin my eyes were wider opin than they are now. Man alive, for the colonel to whip me on the peg in that way! Me that have saved the repitation av a ten times better man than him! 'Twas ne-farious, an' that manes a power av evil!"

"Never mind the nefariousness," I said. "Whose reputation did you save?"

"More's the pity, 'twasn't my own, but I tuk more trouble wid ut than av ut was. 'Twas just my way, messin' wid fwhat was no business av mine. Hear now!" He settled himself at ease on the top of the carriage. "I'll tell you all about ut. Av coorse I will name no names, for there's wan that's an orf'cer's lady now, that was in ut, and no more will I name places, for a man is thracked by a place."

"Eyah!" said Ortheris, lazily, "but this is a mixed story wot's comin'."

"Wanst upon a time, as the childer-books say, I was a recruity."

"Was you, though?" said Ortheris; "now that's extryordinary!"

"Orth'ris," said Mulvaney, "av you opin thim lips av yours again, I will, savin' your presince, sorr, take you by the slack av your trousers an' heave you."

"I'm mum," said Ortheris. "Wot 'appened when you was a recruity?"

"I was a betther recruity than you iver was or will be, but that's neither here nor there. Thin I became a man, an' the divil of a man I was fifteen years ago. They called me Buck Mulvaney in thim days, an', begad, I tuk a woman's eye. I did that! Ortheris, ye scrub, fwhat are ye sniggerin' at? Do you misdoubt me?"

"Devil a doubt!" said Ortheris; "but I've 'eard summat like that before."

Mulvaney dismissed the impertinence with a lofty wave of his hand and continued:

"An' the orf'cers av the rig'mint I was in in thim days was orf'cers—gran' men, wid a manner on 'em, an' a way wid 'em such as is not made these days—all but wan—wan o' the capt'ns. A bad dhrill, a wake voice, an' a limp leg—thim three things are the signs av a bad man. You bear that in your hid, Orth'ris, me son.

"An' the colonel av the rig'mint had a daughter—wan av thim lamb-like, bleatin', pick-me-up-an'-carry-me-or-I'll-die gurls such as was made for the natural prey av men like the capt'n who was iverlastin' payin' coort to her, though the colonel he said, time an' over, 'Kape out av the brute's way, my dear.' But he niver had the heart for to send her away from the throuble, bein' as he was a widower, an' she their wan child."

"Stop a minute, Mulvaney," said I; "how in the world did you come to know these things?"

"How did I come?" said Mulvaney, with a scornful grunt; "bekase I'm turned durin' the quane's pleasure to a lump av

wood, lookin' out straight forninst me, wid a—a—candelabrum in my hand, for you to pick your cards out av, must I not see nor feel? Av coorse I du! Up my back, an' in my boots, an' in the short hair av the neck—that's where I kape my eyes whin I'm on duty an' the reg'lar wans are fixed. Know! Take my word for it, sorr, ivrything an' a great dale more is known in a rig'mint; or fwhat wud be the use av a mess sargint, or a sargint's wife doin' wet-nurse to the major's baby? To reshume. He was a bad dhrill, was this capt'n—a rotten bad dhrill—an' whin first I ran me eye over him, I sez to myself: 'My militia bantam!' I sez, 'my cock av a Gosport dunghill'—'twas from Portsmouth he came to us—'there's combs to be cut,' sez I, 'an', by the grace av God, 'tis Terence Mulvaney will cut thim.'

"So he wint menowderin', and minanderin', an' blandandhering roun' an' about the colonel's daughter, an' she, poor innocint, lookin' at him like a comm'ssariat bullock looks at the comp'ny cook. He'd a dhirty little scrub av a black mustache, an' he twisted an' turned ivry wurrd he used as av he found ut too sweet for to spit out. Eyah! He was a tricky man an' a liar by natur'. Some are born so. He was wan. I knew he was over his belt in money borrowed from natives; besides a lot av other matthers which, in regard to your presince, sorr, I will oblitherate. A little av fwhat I knew, the colonel knew, for he wud have none av him, an' that, I'm thinkin', by fwhat happened aftherwards, the capt'n knew.

"Wan day, bein' mortial idle, or they wud never ha' thried ut, the rig'mint gave amshure theatricals—orf'cers an' orf'cers' ladies. You've seen the likes time an' agin, sorr, an' poor fun 'tis for them that sit in the back row an' stamp wid their boots for the honor av the rig'mint. I was told off for to shif' the scenes, haulin' up this an' draggin' down that. Light work ut was, wid lashins av beer and the gurl that dhressed the orf'cers ladies . . . but she died in Aggra twelve years gone, an' my tongue's gettin' the betther av me. They was actin' a play thing called 'Sweet-

hearts,' which you may ha' heard av, an' the colonel's daughter she was a lady's-maid. The capt'n was a boy called Broom—Spread Broom was his name in the play. Thin I saw—ut come out in the actin'—fwhat I niver saw before, an' that was that he was no gentleman. They was too much together, thim two, a-whisperin' behind the scenes I shifted, an' some av what they said I heard; for I was death—blue death an' ivy—on the comb-cuttin'. He was iverlastin'ly oppressing her to fall in wid some sneakin' schame av his, an' she was thryin' to stand out against him, but not as though she was set in her will. I wonder now in thim days that my ears did not grow a yard on me head wid list'nin'. But I looked straight forninst me, an' hauled up this an' dragged down that, such as was my duty, an' the orf'cers' ladies sez one to another, thinkin' I was out av listen-reach: 'Fwhat an obligin' young man is this Corp'ril Mulvaney!' I was a corp'ril then. I was rejuced afterward, but, no matther, I was a corp'ril wanst.

"Well, this 'Sweethearts'" business wint on like most amshure theatricals, an' barrin' fwhat I suspicioned, 'twasn't till the dhress-rehearsal that I saw for certain that thim two —he the blackguard, an' she no wiser than she should ha' been—had put up an evasion."

"A what?" said I.

"E-vasion! Fwhat you lorruds an' ladies call an elopement. E-vasion I calls it, bekaze, exceptin' whin 'tis right an' natural an' proper, 'tis wrong an' dhirty to steal a man's wan child not knowin' her own mind. There was a sargint in the comm'ssariat who set my face upon e-vasions. I'll tell you about that—"

"Stick to the bloomin' captains, Mulvaney," said Ortheris; "comm'ssariat sargints is low."

Mulvaney accepted the emendation and went on:

"Now, I knew that the colonel was no fool, any more than me, for I was hild the smartest man in the rig'mint, an' the colonel was the best orf'cer commandin' in Asia; so fwhat he said an' I said was a mortial truth. We knew that

the capt'n was bad; but, for reasons which I have already oblitherated, I knew more than me colonel. I wud ha' rolled out his face wid the butt av my gun before permittin' av him to steal the gurl. Saints knew av he wud ha' married her, and av he didn't she wud be in great tormint, an' the divil av what you, sorr, call a 'scandal.' But I niver sthruck, niver raised me hand on my shuperior orf'cer; an' that was a merricle now I come to considher it."

"Mulvaney, the dawn's risin'," said Ortheris, "an' we're no nearer 'ome than we was at the beginnin'. Lend me your pouch. Mine's all dust."

Mulvaney pitched his pouch across, and he filled his pipe afresh.

"So the dhress-rehearsal came to an end, an', bekaze I was curious, I stayed behind whin the scene-shiftin' was ended, an' I shud ha' been in barricks, lyin' as flat as a toad under a painted cottage thing. They was talkin' in whispers, an' she was shiverin' an' gaspin' like a freshhukked fish. 'Are you sure you've got the hang av the manewvers?' sez he, or wurrds to that effec', as the coortmartial sez. 'Sure as death,' sez she, 'but I misdoubt 'tis cruel hard on my father.' 'Damn your father,' sez he, or anyways 'twas fwhat he thought, 'the arrangement is as clear as mud. Jungi will drive the carri'ge afther all's over, an' you come to the station, cool an' aisy, in time for the two-o'clock thrain, where I'll be wid your kit.' 'Faith,' thinks I to myself, 'thin there's a ayah in the business tu!'

"A powerful bad thing is a ayah. Don't you niver have any thruck wid wan. Thin he began sootherin' her, an' all the orf'cers an' orf'cers' ladies left, an' they put out the lights. To explain the theory av the flight, as they say at muskthry, you must understand that afther this 'Sweethearts' " nonsinse was ended, there was another little bit av a play called 'Couples'—some kind av couple or another. The gurl was actin' in this, but not the man. I suspicioned he'd go to the station wid the gurl's kit at the end av the first piece. 'Twas the kit that flusthered me, for I knew

for a capt'n to go trapesing about the impire wid the Lord knew what av a *truso* on his arrum was nefarious, an' wud be worse than easin' the flag, so far as the talk aftherward wint."

" 'Old on, Mulvaney. Wot's *truso?*" said Ortheris.

"You're an oncivilized man, me son. Whin a gurl's married, all her kit an' 'couterments are *truso*, which manes weddin'-portion. An' 'tis the same whin she's runnin' away, even wid the biggest blackguard on the arrmy list.

"So I made my plan av campaign. The colonel's house was a good two miles away. 'Dennis,' sez I to my color-sargint, 'av you love me lend me your kyart, for me heart is bruk an' me feet is sore wid trampin' to and from this foolishness at the Gaff.' An' Dennis lent ut, wid a rampin', stampin' red stallion in the shafts. Whin they was all settled down to their 'Sweethearts' for the first scene, which was a long wan, I slips outside and into the kyart. Mother av Hivin! but I made that horse walk, an' we came into the colonel's compound as the divil wint through Athlone—in standin' leps. There was no one there excipt the servints, an' I wint round to the back an' found the girl's ayah.

" 'Ye black brazen Jezebel,' sez I, 'sellin' your masther's honor for five rupees—pack up all the Miss Sahib's kit an' look slippy! Capt'n Sahib's order,' sez I; 'goin' to the station we are,' I sez, an' wid that I laid my finger to my nose an' looked the schamin' sinner I was.

" '*Bote acchy*,' says she; so I knew she was in the business, an' I piled up all the sweet talk I'd iver learned in the bazaars on to this she-bullock, an' prayed av her to put all the quick she knew into the thing. While she packed, I stud outside an' sweated, for I was wanted for to shif' the second scene. I tell you, a young gurl's e-vasion manes as much baggage as a rig'mint on the line av march! 'Saints help Dennis's springs,' thinks I, as I bundled the stuff into the thrap, 'for I'll have no mercy!'

" 'I'm comin' too,' says the ayah.

" 'No, you don't,' sez I, 'later—*pechy!* You *baito* where

you are. I'll *pechy* come an' bring you *sart*, along with me, you maraudin' '—niver mind fwhat I called her.

"Thin I wint for the Gaff, an' by the special ordher av Providence, for I was doin' a good work you will understhand, Dennis's springs hild toight. 'Now, whin the capt'n goes for that kit,' thinks I, 'he'll be throubled.' At the end av 'Sweethearts' off the capt'n runs in his kyart to the colonel's house, an' I sits down on the steps and laughs. Wanst an' again I slipped in to see how the little piece was goin', an' whin ut was near endin' I stepped out all among the carriages an' sings out very softly, 'Jungi!' Wid that a carr'ge began to move, an' I waved to the dhriver. 'Hitherao!' sez I, an' he hitheraoed till I judged he was at proper distance, an' thin I tuk him, fair an' square betune the eyes, all I knew for good or bad, an' he dhropped wid a guggle like the canteen beer-engine whin uts runnin' low. Thin I ran to the kyart an' tuk out all the kit an' piled it into the carr'ige, the sweat runnin' down my face in dhrops. 'Go home,' sez I to the sais; 'you'll find a man close here. Very sick he is. Take him away, an' av you iver say wan wurrd about fwhat you've *dekkoed*, I'll marrow you till your own wife won't *sumjao* who you are!' Thin I heard the stampin' av feet at the ind av the play, an' I ran in to let down the curtain. Whin they all came out the gurl thried to hide herself behind wan av the pillars, an' sez 'Jungi' in a voice that wudn't ha' scared a hare. I run over to Jungi's carr'ige an' tuk up the lousy old horse-blanket on the box, wrapped my head an' the rest av me in ut, an' dhrove up to where she was.

"'Miss Sahib,' sez I; 'going to the station. Captain Sahib's order!' an' widout a sign she jumped in all among her own kit.

"I laid to an' dhruv like steam to the colonel's house before the colonel was there, an' she screamed an' I thought she was goin' off. Out comes the ayah, saying all sorts av things about the capt'n havin' come for the kit an' gone to the station.

"'Take out the luggage, you divil,' sez I, 'or I'll murther you!'

"The lights av the thraps people comin' from the Gaff was showin' acrost the parade-ground, an' by this an' that, the way thim two women worked at the bundles an' thrunks was a caution! I was dyin' to help, but, seein' I didn't want to be known, I sat wid the blanket roun' me an' coughed an' thanked the saints there was no moon that night.

"Whin all was in the house again, I niver asked for *bukshish*, but dhruv tremenjus in the opp'site way from the other carr'iges an' put out my lights. Presintly, I saw a naygur man wallowin' in the road. I slipped down before I got to him, for I suspicioned Providence was wid me all through that night. 'Twas Jungi, his nose smashed in flat, all dumb sick as you please. Dennis's man must have tilted him out av the thrap. Whin he came to, 'Hutt!' sez I, but he began to howl.

"'You black lump av dirt,' I sez, 'is this the way you dhrive your *gharri?* That *tikka* has been owin' an' fereowin' all over the bloomin' country this whole bloomin' night, an' you as *mut-walla* as Davey's sow. Get up, you hog!' sez I, louder, for I heard the wheels av a thrap in the dark; 'get up an' light your lamps, or you'll be run into!' This was on the road to the railway station.

"'Fwhat the divil's this?' sez the capt'n's voice in the dhark, an' I could judge he was in a lather av rage.

"'*Gharri* dhriver here, dhrunk, sorr,' sez I; 'I've found his *gharri* sthrayin' about cantonmints, an' now I've found him.'

"'Oh!' sez the capt'n; 'fwhat's his name?' I stooped down an' pretended to listen.

"'He sez his name's Jungi, sorr,' sez I.

"'Hould my harse,' sez the capt'n to his man, an' wid that he gets down wid the whip an' lays into Jungi, just mad wid rage an' swearin' like the scut he was.

"I thought, afther a while, he wud kill the man, so I sez,

'Stop, sir, or you'll murdher him!' That dhrew all his fire on me, an' he cursed me into blazes, an' out again. I stud to attenshin an' saluted: 'Sorr,' sez I, 'av ivry man in this wurruld had his rights, I'm thinkin' that more than wan wud be beaten to a shakin' jelly for this night's work—that never came off at all, sorr, as you see?' 'Now,' thinks I to myself, 'Terence Mulvaney, you've cut your own throat, for he'll sthrike, an' you'll knock him down for the good av his sowl an' your own iverlastin' dishgrace!'

"But the capt'n never said a single wurrd. He choked where he stud, an' thin he wint into his thrap widout sayin' good-night, an' I wint back to barricks."

"And then?" said Ortheris and I together.

"That was all," said Mulvaney; "niver another wurrd did I hear av the whole thing. All I know was that there was no e-vasion, an' that was fwhat I wanted. Now, I put ut to you, sorr, is ten days' C. B. a fit an' a proper tratement for a man who has behaved as me?"

"Well, any'ow," said Ortheris, "tweren't this 'ere colonel's daughter, an' you was blazin' copped when you tried to wash in the fort ditch."

"That," said Mulvaney, finishing the champagne, "is a shuparfluous an' impert'nint observation."

PRIVATE LEAROYD'S STORY

And he told a tale.—*Chronicles of Guatama Buddha*

Far from the haunts of company officers who insist upon kit-inspections, far from keen-nosed sergeants who sniff the pipe stuffed into the bedding-roll, two miles from the tumult of the barracks, lies the Trap. It is an old well, shadowed by a twisted pipal-tree and fenced with high grass. Here, in the years gone by, did Private Ortheris establish his depot and menagerie for such possessions, living and dead, as could not safely be introduced to the barrack-room. Here were

gathered Houdin pullets, and fox-terriers of undoubted pedigree and more than doubtful ownership, for Ortheris was an inveterate poacher, and pre-eminent among a regiment of neat-handed dog-stealers.

Never again will the long lazy evenings return wherein Ortheris, whistling softly, moved surgeon-wise among the captives of his craft at the bottom of the well; when Learoyd sat in the niche, giving sage counsel on the management of "tykes," and Mulvaney, from the crook of the overhanging pipal, waved his enormous boots in benediction above our heads, delighting us with tales of love and war, and strange experiences of cities and men.

Ortheris—landed at last in the "little stuff bird-shop" for which your soul longed; Learoyd—back again in the smoky, stone-ribbed north, amid the clang of the Bradford looms; Mulvaney—grizzled, tender, and very wise Ulysses, sweltering on the earth-work of a Central India line—judge if I have forgotten old days in the Trap!

Orth'ris as allus thinks he knaws more than other foaks, said she wasn't a real laady, but nobbut a Hewrasian. I don't gainsay as her culler was a bit doosky like. But she was a laady. Why, she rode iv a carriage, an' good 'osses, too, an' her 'air was that oiled as you could see your faice in it, an' she wore di'mond rings an' a goold chain, an' silk an' satin dresses as mun 'a' cost a deal, for it isn't a cheap shop as keeps enough o' one pattern to fit a figure like hers. Her name was Mrs. De Sussa, an' t' waay I coom to be acquainted wi' her was along of our colonel's laady's dog Rip.

I've seen a vast o' dogs, but Rip was t' prettiest picter of a cliver fox-tarrier 'at iver I set eyes on. He could do owt you like but speeak, an' t' colonel's laady set more store by him than if he had been a Christian. She hed bairns of her awn, but they was i' England, and Rip seemed to get all t' coodlin' and pettin' as belonged to a bairn by good right.

But Rip were a bit on a rover, an' hed a habit o' breakin' out o' barricks like, and trottin' round t' plaice as if he were

t' cantonment magistrate coom round inspectin'. The colonel leathers him once or twice, but Rip didn't care, an' kept on gooin' his rounds, wi' his taail a-waggin' as if he were flag-signalin' to t' world at large 'at he was "gettin' on nicely, thank yo', and how's yo'sen?" An' then t' colonel, as was noa sort of a hand wi' a dog, tees him oop. A real clipper of a dog, an' it's noa wonder yon laady, Mrs. De Sussa, should tek a fancy tiv him. Theer's one o' t' Ten Commandment ssays yo' maun't cuvvet your neebor's ox nor his jackass, but it doesn't say nowt about his tarrier-dogs, an' happen thot's t' reason why Mrs. De Sussa cuv-veted Rip, thou' she went to church reg'lar along wi' her husband, who was so mich darker 'at if he hedn't such a good coaat tiv his back yo' might ha' called him a black man, and nut tell a lee nawther. They said he addled his brass i' jute, an' he'd a rare lot on it.

Well, you seen, when they teed Rip up, t' poor awd lad didn't enjoy very good 'elth. So t' colonel's laady sends for me as 'ad a naame for bein' knowledgeable about a dog, an' axes what's ailin' wi' him.

"Why," says I, "he's getten t' mopes, an' what he wants is his libbaty an' coompany like t' rest on us; wal happen a rat or two 'ud liven him oop. It's low, mum," says I, "is rats, but it's t' nature of a dog; an' soa's cuttin' round an' meetin' another dog or two, an' passin' t' time o' day, an' hevvin' a bit of a turn-up wi' him like a Christian."

So she says her dog maunt niver fight an' noa Christians iver fought.

"Then what's a soldier for?" says I; an' I explains to her t' contrairy qualities of a dog, 'at, when yo' coom to think on't, is one o' t' curusest things as is. For they larn to behave theirsens like gentlemen born, fit for t' fost o' coompany—they tell me t' widdy herself is fond of a good dog and knaws one when she sees it as well as onnybody: then on t'other hand a-tewin' round after cats an' gettin' mixed oop i' all manners o' blackguardly street rows, an' killin' rats, an' fightin' like divils.

T' colonel's laady says: "Well, Learoyd, I doan't agree wi' you, but you're right in a way o' speeakin', an' I should like yo' to tek Rip out a-walkin' wi' you sometimes; but yo' maunt let him fight, nor chase cats, nor do nowt 'orrid;" an' them was her very wo'ds.

Soa Rip an' me gooes out a-walkin' o' evenin's, he bein' a dog as did credit tiv a man, an' I catches a lot o' rats an' we hed a bit of a match on in an awd dry swimmin'-bath at back o' t' cantonments, an' it was none so long afore he was as bright as a button again. He hed a way o' flyin' at them big yaller pariah dogs as if he was a harrow offan a bow, an' though his weight were nowt, he tuk 'em so suddint-like they rolled over like skittles in a halley, an' when they coot he stretched after 'em as if he were rabbit-runnin'. Saame with cats when he cud get t' cat agaate o' runnin'.

One evenin', him an' me was trespassin' ovver a compound wall after one of them mongooses 'at he'd started, an' we was busy grubbin' round a prickle-bush, an' when we looks up there was Mrs. De Sussa wi' a parasel ovver her shoulder, a-watchin' us. "Oh, my!" she sings out; "there's that lovelee dog! Would he let me stroke him, Mister Soldier?"

"Ay, he would, mum," sez I, "for he's fond o' laady's coompany. Coom here, Rip, an' speeak to this kind laady." An' Rip, seein' 'at t' moongoose hed getten clean awaay, cooms up like t' gentleman he was, nivver a hauporth shy nor okkord.

"Oh, you beautiful—you prettee dog!" she says, clippin' an' chantin' her speech in a way them sooart has o' their awn; "I would like a dog like you. You are so verree lovelee —so awfullee prettee," an' all thot sort o' talk, 'at a dog o' sense mebbe thinks nowt on, tho' he bides it by reason o' his breedin'.

An' then I meks him joomp ovver my swagger-cane, an' shek hands, an' beg, an' lie dead, an' a lot o' them tricks as laadies teeaches dogs, though I doan't haud with it mysen, for it's makin' a fool o' a good dog to do such like.

An' at lung length it cooms out 'at she'd been thrawin' sheep's eyes, as t' sayin' is, at Rip for many a day. Yo' see, her childer was grown up, an' she'd nowt mich to do, an' were allus fond of a dog. Soa she axes me if I'd tek somethin' to dhrink. An' we goes into t' drawn-room wheer her 'usband was a-settin'. They meks a gurt fuss ovver t' dog an' I has a bottle o' aale an' he gave me a handful o' cigars.

Soa I coomed away, but t' awd lass sings out: "Oh, Mister Soldier! please coom again and bring that prettee dog."

I didn't let on to t' colonel's laady about Mrs. De Sussa, and Rip, he says nowt nawther; an' I gooes again, an' ivry time there was a good dhrink an' a handful o' good smooaks. An' I telled t' awd lass a heeap more about Rip than I'd ever heeared; how he tuk t' fost prize at Lunnon dog-show and cost thotty-three pounds fower shillin' from t' man as bred him; 'at his own brother was t' propputty o' t' Prince o' Wailes, an' 'at he had a pedigree as long as a dook's. An' she lapped it all oop an' were niver tired o' admirin' him. But when t' awd lass took to givin' me money an' I seed 'at she were gettin' fair fond about t' dog, I began to suspicion summat. Onnybody may give a soldier t' price of a pint in a friendly way an' theer's no 'arm done, but when it cooms to five rupees slipt into your hand, sly like, why, it's what t' 'lectioneerin' fellows calls bribery an' corruption. Specially when Mrs. De Sussa threwed hints how t' cold weather would soon be ovver an' she was goin' to Munsooree Pahar, an' we was goin' to Rawalpindi, an' she would niver see Rip any more onless somebody she knowed on would be kind tiv her.

Soa I tells Mulvaney an' Ortheris all t' taale thro', beginnin' to end.

"'Tis larceny that wicked ould laady manes," says t' Irishman, "'tis felony she is sejuicin' ye into, my friend Learoyd, but I'll purtect your innocince. I'll save ye from the wicked wiles av that wealthy ould woman, an' I'll go wid ye this evenin' and spake to her the wurrds av truth

an' honesty. But, Jock," says he, waggin' his heead, " 'twas not like ye to kape all that good dhrink an' thim fine cigars to yerself, while Orth'ris here an' me have been prowlin' round with throats as dry as limekilns, and nothin' to smoke but canteen plug. 'Twas a dhirty thrick to play on a comrade, for why should you, Learoyd, be balancin' yourself on the butt av a satin chair, as if Terence Mulvaney was not the aquil av anybody who thrades in jute!"

"Let alone me," sticks in Orth'ris; "but that's like life. Them wot's really fitted to decorate society get no show, while a blunderin' Yorkshireman like you—"

"Nay," says I, "it's none o' t' blunderin' Yorkshireman she wants, it's Rip. He's t' gentleman this journey."

Soa t' next day, Mulvaney an' Rip an' me goes to Mrs. De Sussa's, an' t' Irishman bein' a strainger she wor a bit shy at fost. But you've heeard Mulvaney talk, an' yo' may believe as he fairly bewitched t' awd lass wal she let out 'at she wanted to tek Rip away wi' her to Munsooree Pahar. Then Mulvaney changes his tune an' axes her solemn-like if she'd thought o' t' consequences o' gettin' two poor but honest soldiers sent t' Andamning Islands. Mrs. De Sussa began to cry, so Mulvaney turns round oppen t' other tack and smooths her down, allowin' 'at Rip ud be a vast better off in t' hills than down i' Bengal, and 'twas a pity he shouldn't go wheer he was so well beliked. And soa he went on, backin' an' fillin' an' workin' up t' awd lass wal she felt as if her life warn't worth nowt if she didn't hev t' dog.

Then all of a suddint he says: "But ye shall have him, marm, for I've a feelin' heart, not like this cowld-blooded Yorkshireman; but 'twill cost ye not a penny less than three hundher rupees."

"Don't you's believe him, mum," says I; "t' colonel's laady wouldn't tek five hundred for him."

"Who said she would?" says Mulvaney; "it's not buyin' him I mane, but for the sake o' this kind, good laady, I'll do what I never dreamt to do in my life. I'll stale him!"

"Don't say steal," says Mrs. De Sussa; "he shall have the happiest home. Dogs often get lost, you know, and then they stray, an' he likes me, and I like him as I niver liked a dog yet, an' I must hev him. If I got him at t' last minute I could carry him off to Munsooree Pahar and nobody would niver knaw."

Now an' again Mulvaney looked acrost at me, an' though I could mak' nowt o' what he was after, I concluded to take his leead.

"Well, mum," I says, "I never thowt to coom down to dog-steealin', but if my comrade sees how it could be done to oblige a laady like yo'sen, I'm nut t' man to hod back, tho' it's a bad business, I'm thinkin', an' three hundred rupees is a poor set-off again t' chance of them Damning Islands as Mulvaney talks on."

"I'll mek it three fifty," says Mrs. De Sussa; "only let me hev t' dog!"

So we let her persuade us, an' she teks Rip's measure theer an' then, an' sent to Hamilton's to order a silver collar again t' time when he was to be her awn, which was to be t' day she set off for Munsooree Pahar.

"Sitha, Mulvaney," says I, when we was outside, "you're niver goin' to let her hev Rip!"

"An' would ye disappoint a poor ould woman?" says he; "she shall have *a* Rip."

"An' wheer's he to come through?" says I.

"Learoyd, my man," he sings out, "you're a pretty man av your inches an' a good comrade, but your head is made av duff. Isn't our friend Orth'ris a taxidermist, an' a rale artist wid his nimble white fingers! An' what's a taxidermist but a man who can thrate skins? Do ye mind the white dog that belongs to the canteen sargint, bad cess to him—he that's lost half his time an' snarlin' the rest? He shall be lost for good now; an' do ye mind that he's the very spit in shape an' size av the colonel's, barrin' that his tail is an inch too long, an' he has none av the color that divarsifies the rale Rip, an' his timper is that av his masther an' worse. But

fwhat is an inch on a dog's tail? An' fwhat to a profes-sional like Orth'ris is a few ring-straked shpots av black, brown, an' white? Nothin' at all, at all."

Then we meets Orth'ris, an' that little man, bein' sharp as a needle, seed his way through t' business in a minute. An' he went to work a-practicin' 'air-dyes the very next day, beginnin' on some white rabbits he had, an' then he drored all Rip's markin's on t' back of a white commissariat bullock, so as to get his 'and in an' be sure of his colors; shadin' off brown into black as nateral as life. If Rip had a fault it was too mich markin', but it was straingely reg'lar, an' Orth'ris settled himself to make a fost-rate job on it when he got haud o' t' canteen sargint's dog. Theer niver was sich a dog as thot for bad temper, an' it did nut get no better when his tail hed to be fettled an inch an' a half shorter. But they may talk o' theer Royal Academies as they like, I niver seed a bit o' animal paintin' to beat t' copy as Orth'ris made of Rip's marks, wal t' picter itself was snarlin' all t' time an' tryin' to get at Rip standin' theer to be copied as good as goold.

Orth'ris allus hed as mich conceit on himsen as would lift a balloon, an' he wor so pleeased wi' his sham Rip he wor for tekking him to Mrs. De Sussa before she went away. But Mulvaney an' me stopped thot, knowin' Orth'ris's work, though niver so cliver, was nobbut skin-deep. An' at last Mrs. De Sussa fixed t' day for startin' to Munsooree Pahar. We was to tek Rip to t' stayshun i' a basket an' hand him ovver just when they was ready to start, an' then she'd give us t' brass—as was agreed upon.

An' my wo'd! It were high time she were off, for them 'air-dyes upon t' cur's back took a vast of paintin' to keep t' reet culler, tho' Orth'ris spent a matter of seven rupees six annas i' t' best drooggist shops i' Calcutta.

An' t' canteen sergeant was lookin' for 'is dog every-wheer; an', wi' bein' tied up, t' beast's timper got waur nor ever.

It wor i' t' evenin' when t' train started thro' Howrah,

an' we 'elped Mrs. De Sussa wi' about sixty boxes, an' then we gave her t' basket. Orth'ris, for pride av his work, axed us to let him coom along wi' us, an' he couldn't held liftin' t' lid an' showin' t' cur as he lay coiled oop.

"Oh!" says t' awd lass; "the beautee! How sweet he looks!" An' just then t' beauty snarled an' showed his teeth, so Mulvaney shuts down t' lid and says: "Ye'll be careful, marm, whin ye tek him out. He's disaccustomed to traveling by t' railway, an' he'll be sure to want his rale mistress an' his friend Learoyd, so ye'll make allowance for his feelings at fost."

She would do all thot an' more for the dear, good Rip, an' she would nut oppen t' basket till they were miles away, for fear anybody should recognize him, an' we were real good and kind soldier-men, we were, an' she honds me a bundle o' notes, an' then cooms up a few of her relations an' friends to say good-by—not more than seventy-five there wasn't—an' we cuts away.

What coom to t' three hundred and fifty rupees? That's what I can scarcelins tell you, but we melted it. It was share an' share alike, for Mulvaney said: "If Learoyd got hold of Mrs. De Sussa first, sure 'twas I that remimbered the sargint's dog just in the nick av time, an' Orth'ris was the artist av janius that made a work av art out av that ugly piece av ill-nature. Yet, by way av a thank-offerin' that I was not led into felony by that wicked ould woman, I'll send a thrifle to Father Victor for the poor people he's always beggin' for."

But me an' Orth'ris, he bein' cockney an' I bein' pretty far north, did not see it i' t' saame way. We'd getten t' brass, an' we meaned to keep it. An' soa we did—for a short time.

Noa, noa, we niver heeard a wo'd more o' t' awd lass. Our rig'mint went to Pindi, an' t' canteen sargint he got himself another tyke insteead o' t' one 'at got lost so reg'lar, an' was lost for good at last.

THE BIG DRUNK DRAF'.

We're goin' 'ome, we're goin' 'ome—
  Our ship is *at* the shore,
An' you mus' pack your 'aversack,
  For we won't come back no more.
Ho, don't you grieve for me,
  My lovely Mary Ann,
For I'll marry you yet on a fourp'ny bit,
  As a time-expired ma-a-an!
—*Barrack-room Ballad*

An awful thing has happened! My friend, Private Mulvaney, who went home in the "Serapis," time-expired, not very long ago, has come back to India as a civilian! It was all Dinah Shadd's fault. She could not stand the poky little lodgings, and she missed her servant Abdullah more than words could tell. The fact was that the Mulvaneys had been out here too long, and had lost touch of England.

Mulvaney knew a contractor on one of the new Central India lines, and wrote to him for some sort of work. The contractor said that if Mulvaney could pay the passage he would give him command of a gang of coolies for old sake's sake. The pay was eighty-five rupees a month, and Dinah Shadd said that if Terence did not accept she would make his life a "basted purgathory." Therefore the Mulvaneys came out as "civilians," which was a great and terrible fall; though Mulvaney tried to disguise it by saying that he was "ker'nel on the railway line, an' a consequinshal man."

He wrote me an invitation, on a tool-indent form, to visit him; and I came down to the funny little "construction" bungalow at the side of the line. Dinah Shadd had planted pease about and about, and nature had spread all manner of green stuff round the place. There was no change in Mul-

vaney except the change of raiment, which was deplorable, but could not be helped. He was standing upon his trolly, haranguing a gang-man, and his shoulders were as well drilled, and his big, thick chin was as clean-shaven as ever.

"I'm a civilian now," said Mulvaney. "Cud you tell that I was iver a martial man? Don't answer, sorr, av you're strainin' betune a complimint an' a lie. There's no houldin' Dinah Shadd now she's got a house av her own. Go inside an' dhrink tay out av chiny in the drrrrawin'-room, an' thin we'll dhrink like Christians undher the tree here. Scut, ye naygur-folk! There's a sahib come to call on me, an' that's more than he'll iver do for you onless you run! Get out, an' go on pilin' up the earth, quick, till sundown."

When we three were comfortably settled under the big *sisham* in front of the bungalow, and the first rush of questions and answers about Privates Ortheris and Learoyd and old times and places had died away, Mulvaney said, reflectively: "Glory be there's no p'rade to-morrow, an' no bun-headed corp'ril-bhoy to give you his lip. An' yit I don't know. 'Tis harrd to be something ye niver were an' niver meant to be, an' all the ould days shut up along wid your papers. Eyah! I'm growin' rusty, an' 'tis the will av God that a man mustn't serve his quane for time an' all."

He helped himself to a fresh peg, and sighed furiously.

"Let your beard grow, Mulvaney," said I, "and then you won't be troubled with those notions. You'll be a real civilian."

Dinah Shadd had confided to me in the drawing-room her desire to coax Mulvaney into letting his beard grow. "'Twas so civilian-like," said poor Dinah, who hated her husband's hankering for his old life.

"Dinah Shadd, you're a dishgrace to an honust, clane scraped man!" said Mulvaney, without replying to me. "Grow a beard on your own chin, darlint, and lave my razors alone. They're all that stand betune me and dis-ris-pect-ability. Av I didn't shave, I wud be torminted wid an outrajis thurrst; for there's nothin' so dhryin' to the throat

as a big billy-goat beard waggin' undher the chin. Ye wudn't have me dhrink always, Dinah Shadd? By the same token, you're kapin' me crool dhry now. Let me look at that whisky."

The whisky was lent and returned, but Dinah Shadd, who had been just as eager as her husband in asking after old friends, rent me with:

"I take shame for you, sorr, comin' down here—though the saints know you're as welkim as the daylight whin you do come—an' upsettin' Terence's head wid your nonsense about—about fwhat's much better forgotten. He bein' a civilian now, an' you niver was aught else. Can you not let the arrmy rest? 'Tis not good for Terence."

I took refuge by Mulvaney, for Dinah Shadd has a temper of her own.

"Let be—let be," said Mulvaney. " 'Tis only wanst in a way I can talk about the ould days." Then to me: "Ye say Dhrumshticks is well an' his lady tu? I niver knew how I liked the gray garron till I was shut av him an' Asia." ("Dhrumshticks" was the nickname of the colonel commanding Mulvaney's old regiment.) "Will you be seein' him again? You will. Thin tell him"—Mulvaney's eyes began to twinkle—"tell him wid Privit—"

"Mister, Terence," interrupted Dinah Shadd.

"Now the divil an' all his angels an' the firmament av hiven fly away wid the 'Mister,' an' the sin av makin' me swear be on your confession, Dinah Shadd! Privit, I tell ye. Wid Privit Mulvaney's best obedience, that but for me the last time-expired wud be still pullin' hair on their way to the sea."

He threw himself back in the chair, chuckled, and was silent.

"Mrs. Mulvaney," I said, "please take up the whisky, and don't let him have it until he has told the story."

Dinah Shadd dexterously whipped the bottle away, saying at the same time, " 'Tis nothing to be proud av," and, thus captured by the enemy, Mulvaney spake:

" 'Twas on Chuesday week. I was behaderin' round wid the gangs on the 'bankmint—I've taught the hoppers how to kape step an' stop screechin'—whin a head-gangman comes up to me, wid about two inches av shirt-tail hanging round his neck an' a disthressful light in his oi. 'Sahib,' sez he, 'there's a reg'mint an' a half av soldiers up at the junction, knockin' red cinders out av ivrything an' ivrybody! They thried to hang me in my cloth,' he sez, 'an' there will be murder an' ruin an' rape in the place before nightfall! They say they're comin' down here to wake us up. What will we do wid our women-folk?'

" 'Fetch my throlly!' sez I; 'my heart's sick in my ribs for a wink at anything wid the quane's uniform on ut. Fetch my throlly, an' six av the jildiest men, and run me up in shtyle.' "

"He tuk his best coat," said Dinah Shadd reproachfully.

" 'Twas to do honor to the widdy. I cud ha' done no less, Dinah Shadd. You and your digreshins interfere wid the coorse av the narrative. Have you iver considhered fwhat I wud look like wid me head shaved as well as my chin? You bear that in your mind, Dinah darlin'.

"I was throllied up six miles, all to get a shquint at that draf'. I knew 'twas a spring draf' goin' home, for there's no rig'mint hereabouts, more's the pity."

"Praise the Virgin!" murmured Dinah Shadd. But Mulvaney did not hear.

"Whin I was about three-quarters av a mile off the rest-camp, powtherin' along fit to burrst, I heard the noise av the men, an', on my sowl, sorr, I cud catch the voice av Peg Barney bellowin' like a bison wid the bellyache. You remimber Peg Barney that was in D Comp'ny—a red, hairy scraun, wid a scar on his jaw? Peg Barney that cleared out the Blue Lights' Jubilee meeting wid the cook-room mop last year?

"Thin I knew ut was a draf' of the ould rig'mint, an' I was conshumed wid sorrow for the bhoy that was in charge. We was harrd scrapin's at any time. Did I iver tell you how

Horker Kelley went into clink nakid as Phœbus Apollonius, wid the shirts av the corp'ril an' file undher his arrum? An' he was a moild man! But I'm digreshin'. 'Tis a shame both to the rig'mints and the arrmy sendin' down little orf'cer bhoys wid a draf' av strong men mad wid liquor an' the chanst av gettin' shut av India, an' niver a punishment that's fit to be given right down an' away from cantonmints to the dock! 'Tis this nonsince. Whin I am servin' my time, I'm undher the articles av war, an' can be whipped on the peg for thim. But whin I've served my time, I'm a Reserve man, an' the articles av war haven't any hould on me. An orf'cer can't do anythin' to a time-expired savin' confinin' him to barricks. 'Tis a wise rig'lation, bekaze a time-expired does not have any barricks; bein' on the move all the time. 'Tis a Solomon av a rig'lation, is that. I wud like to be inthroduced to the man who secreted ut. 'Tis easier to get colts from a Kibbereen horse-fair into Galway than to take a bad draf' over ten miles av country. Consiquintly that rig'lation for fear that the men wud be hurt by the little orf'cer bhoy. No matther. The nearer my throlly came to the rest-camp, the woilder was the shine, an' the louder was the voice av Peg Barney. ' 'Tis good I am here,' thinks I to myself, 'for Peg alone is employmint to two or three.' He bein', I well knew, as copped as a dhrover.

"Faith, that rest-camp was a sight! The tent-ropes was all skew-nosed, an' the pegs looked as dhrunk as the men—fifty av thim—the scourin's, an' rinsin's, an' divil's lavin's av the ould rig'mint. I tell you, sorr, they were dhrunker than any men you've ever seen in your mortial life. How does a draf' get dhrunk? How does a frog get fat? They suk ut in through their shkins.

"There was Peg Barney sittin' on the groun' in his shirt —wan shoe off an' wan shoe on—whackin' a tent-peg over the head with his boot, an' sinnin' fit to wake the dead. 'Twas no clane song that he sung, though. 'Twas the 'Divil's Mass.' "

"What's that?" I asked.

"Whin a bad egg is shut av the arrmy, he sings the 'Divil's Mass' for a good riddance; an' that manes swearin' at ivrything from the commandher-in-chief down to the room-corp'ril, such as you niver in your days heard. Some men can swear so as to make green turf crack! Have you ever heard the curse in an Orange lodge? The 'Divil's Mass' is ten times worse, an' Peg Barney was singin' ut, whackin' the tent-peg on the head wid his boot for each man that he cursed. A powerful big voice had Peg Barney, an' a hard swearer he was whin sober. I stood forninst him, an' 'twas not me oi alone that cud tell Peg was dhrunk as a coot.

" 'Good-mornin', Peg,' I sez, whin he dhrew breath afther cursin' the adj'tint-gen'ral; 'I've put on my best coat to see you, Peg Barney,' sez I.

" 'Thin take ut off again,' sez Peg Barney, latherin' away wid the boot; 'take ut off an' dance, ye lousy civilian!'

"Wid that he begins cursin' ould Dhrumshticks, being so full he clean misremimbers the brigade-major an' the judge advokit gen'ral.

" 'Do you not know me, Peg?' sez I, though me blood was hot in me wid being called a civilian."

"An' him a decent married man!" wailed Dinah Shadd.

" 'I do not,' sez Peg, 'but dhrunk or sober I'll tear the hide off your back wid a shovel whin I've stopped singin'.'

" 'Say you so, Peg Barney?' sez I. ' 'Tis clear as mud you've forgotten me. I'll assist your autobiography.' Wid that I stretched Peg Barney, boot an' all, an' wint into the camp. An awful sight ut was!

" 'Where's the orf'cer in charge av the detachment?' sez I to Scrub Greene—the manest little worm that ever walked.

" 'There's no orf'cer, ye ould cook,' sez Scrub; 'we're a bloomin' republic.'

" 'Are you that?' sez I; 'thin I'm O'Connell the Dictator, an' by this you will larn to kape a civil tongue in your rag-box.'

"Wid that I stretched Scrub Greene, an' wint to the orf'cer's tent. 'Twas a new little bhoy—not wan I'd iver

seen before. He was sittin' in his tent, purtendin' not to 'ave ear av the racket.

"I saluted—but for the life av me I mint to shake hands whin I went in. 'Twas the sword hangin' on the tent-pole changed my will.

" 'Can't I help, sorr?' sez I; ' 'tis a strong man's job they've given you an' you'll be wantin' help by sundown.' He was a bhoy wid bowils, that child, an' a rale gintleman.

" 'Sit down,' sez he.

" 'Not before my orf'cer,' sez I; an' I tould him fwhat my service was.

" 'I've heard av you,' sez he. 'You tuk the town av Lungtungpen nakid.'

" 'Faith,' thinks I, 'that's honor an' glory;' for 'twas Lift'nint Brazenose did that job. 'I'm wid ye, sorr,' sez I, 'if I'm av use. They shud niver ha' sent you down wid the draf'. Savin' your presince, sorr,' I sez, ' 'tis only Lift'nint Hackerston in the ould rig'mint can manage a home draf'.'

" 'I've niver had charge of men like this before,' sez he, playin' wid the pens on the table; 'an' I see by the rig'lations—'

" 'Shut your oi to the rig'lations, sorr,' I sez, 'till the throoper's into blue wather. By the rig'lations you've got to tuck thim up for the night, or they'll be runnin' foul av my coolies an' makin' a shiverarium half through the country. Can you trust your non-coms, sorr?'

" 'Yes,' sez he.

" 'Good,' sez I; 'there'll be throuble before the night. Are you marchin', sorr?'

" 'To the next station,' sez he.

" 'Better still,' sez I; 'there'll be big throuble.'

" 'Can't be too hard on a home draf',' sez he; 'the great thing is to get thim in-ship.'

" 'Faith, you've larnt the half av your lesson, sorr,' sez I, 'but av you shtick to the rig'lations you'll niver get thim in-ship at all, at all. Or there won't be a rag av kit betune thim whin you do.'

"'Twas a dear little orf'cer bhoy, an' by way av kapin' his heart up I tould him fwhat I saw wanst in a draf' in Egypt."

"What was that, Mulvaney?" said I.

"Sivin-an'-fifty men sittin' on the bank av a canal, laughin' at a poor little squidgereen av an orf'cer that they'd made wade into the slush an' pitch the things out av the boats for their lord high mightinesses. That made the orf'cer bhoy woild wid indignation.

"'Soft an' aisy, sorr,' sez I; 'you've niver had your draf' in hand since you left cantonmints. Wait till the night, an' your work will be ready to you. Wid your permission, sorr, I will investigate the camp, an' talk to my ould frinds. 'Tis no manner av use thryin' to shtop the divilmint now.'

"Wid that I wint out into the camp an' inthrojuced mysilf to ivry man sober enough to remimber me. I was some wan in the ould days, an' the bhoys was glad to see me—all excipt Peg Barney, wid a eye like a tomato five days in the bazaar, an' a nose to correspon'. They come round me an' shuk me, an' I tould thim I was in privit employ wid an income av me own, an' a drrrawin'-room fit to bate the quane's; an' wid me lies an' me shtories an' nonsince gin'rally I kept 'em quiet in wan way an' another, knockin' roun' the camp. 'Twas bad even thin whin I was the Angil av Peace.

"I talked to me ould non-coms—they was sober—an' betune me an' thim we wore the draf' over into their tents at the proper time. The little orf'cer bhoy he comes round, decint an' civil-spoken as might be.

"'Rough quarters, men,' sez he, 'but you can't look to be as comfortable as in barricks. We must make the best av things. I've shut my eyes to a dale av dog's tricks to-day, an' now there must be no more av ut.'

"'No more we will. Come an' have a dhrink, me son,' sez Peg Barney, staggerin' where he stud. Me little orf'cer bhoy kep his timper.

"'You're a sulky swine, you are,' sez Peg Barney, an' at that the men in the tent began to laugh.

"I tould you me orf'cer bhoy had bowils. He cut Peg Barney as near as might be on the oi that I'd squashed whin we first met. Peg wint spinnin' acrost the tent.

" 'Peg him out, sorr,' sez I, in a whishper.

" 'Peg him out!' sez me orf'cer bhoy, up loud, just as if 'twas battalion p'rade, an' he pickin' his wurrds from the sargint.

"The non-coms tuk Peg Barney—a howlin' handful he was—an' in three minuts he was pegged out—chin down, tight-dhrawn—on his stummick, a peg to each arm an' leg, swearin' fit to turn a naygur white.

"I tuk a peg an' jammed ut into his ugly jaw. 'Bite on that, Peg Barney,' I sez; 'the night is settin' frosty, an' you'll be wantin' divarsion before the mornin'. But for the rig'lations you'd be bitin' on a bullet now at the thriangles, Peg Barney,' sez I.

"All the draf' was out av their tints watchin' Barney bein' pegged.

" ' 'Tis ag'in the rig'lations! He strook him!' screeches out Scrub Greene, who was always a lawyer; an' some of the men tuk up the shoutin'.

" 'Peg out that man!' sez me orf'cer bhoy, niver losin' his timper; an' the non-coms wint in and pegged out Scrub Greene by the side av Peg Barney.

"I could see that the draf' was comin' roun'. The men stud not knowin' fwhat to do.

" 'Get to your tents!' sez me orf'cer bhoy. 'Sargint, put a sintry over these two men.'

"The men wint back into the tents like jackals, an' the rest av the night there was no noise at all excipt the stip av the sintry over the two, an' Scrub Greene blubberin' like a child. 'Twas a chilly night, an' faith ut sobered Peg Barney.

"Just before revelly, me orf'cer bhoy comes out an' sez: 'Loose those men an' send thim to their tents!' Scrub Greene wint away widout a word, but Peg Barney, stiff wid the cowld, stud like a sheep, thryin' to make his orf'cer understhand he was sorry for playin' the goat

"There was no tucker in the draf' whin ut fell in for the march, an' divil a wurrd about 'illegality' could I hear.

"I wint to the ould color sargint and I sez: 'Let me die in glory,' sez I. 'I've seen a man this day!'

" 'A man he is,' sez ould Hother; 'the draf's as sick as a herrin'. They'll all go down to the sea like lambs. That bhoy has the bowils av a cantonmint av gin'rals.'

" 'Amin,' sez I, 'an' good luck go wid him, wheriver he be, by land or by say. Let me know how the draf' gets clear.'

"An' do you know how they did? That bhoy, so I was tould by letter from Bombay, bullydamned 'em down to the dock, till they cudn't call their sowls their own. From the time they left me oi till they was 'tween decks, not wan av thim was more than dacintly dhrunk. An', by the holy articles av war, whin they wint aboard they cheered him till they cudn't spake, an' that, mark you, has not come about wid a draf' in the mim'ry av livin' man! You look to that little orf'cer bhoy. He has bowils. 'Tis not ivry child that wud chuck the rig'lations to Flanders an' stretch Peg Barney on a wink from a brokin an' dilapidated ould carkiss like mesilf. I'd be proud to serve—"

"Terence, you're a civilian," said Dinah Shadd, warningly.

"So I am—so I am. Is ut likely I wud forget ut? But he was a gran' bhoy, all the same, an' I'm only a mudtipper wid a hod on my shoulthers. The whisky's in the heel av your hand, sorr. Wid your good lave we'll dhrink to the ould rig'mint—three fingers—standin' up!"

And we drank.

THE SOLID MULDOON

Did you see John Malone, wid his shinin', brand-new hat?
Did ye see how he walked like a grand aristocrat?
There was flags an' banners wavin' high, an' dhress an shtyle
were shown,
But the best av all the company was Misther John Malone.
—*John Malone*

THIS befell in the old days, and, as my friend Private Mulvaney was specially careful to make clear, the Unregenerate.

There had been a royal dog-fight in the ravine at the back of the rifle-butts, between Learoyd's Jock and Ortheris's Blue Rot—both mongrel Rampur hounds, chiefly ribs and teeth. It lasted for twenty happy, howling minutes, and then Blue Rot collapsed and Ortheris paid Learoyd three rupees, and we were all very thirsty. A dog-fight is a most heating entertainment, quite apart from the shouting, because Rampurs fight over a couple of acres of ground. Later, when the sound of belt-badges clinking against the necks of beer-bottles had died away, conversation drifted from dog to man fights of all kinds. Humans resemble red-deer in some respects. Any talk of fighting seems to wake up a sort of imp in their breasts, and they bell one to the other, exactly like challenging bucks. This is noticeable even in men who consider themselves superior to privates of the line; it shows the refining influence of civilization and the march of progress.

Tale provoked tale, and each tale more beer. Even dreamy Learoyd's eyes began to brighten, and he unburdened himself of a long history in which a trip to Malham Cove, a girl at Pateley Brigg, a ganger, himself and a pair of clogs were mixed in drawling tangle.

"An' so Ah coot's yead oppen from t' chin to t' hair an' he was abed for t' matter o' a month," concluded Learoyd, pensively.

Mulvaney came out of a reverie—he was lying down—and flourished his heels in the air. "You're a man, Learoyd," said he, critically, "but you've only fought wid men, an' that's an ivry-day exparience; but I've stud up to a ghost, an' that was not an ivry-day exparience."

"No?" said Ortheris, throwing a cork at him. "You git up an' address the 'ouse—you an' yer expayriences. Is it a bigger one nor usual?"

" 'Twas the livin' trut'!" answered Mulvaney, stretching out a huge arm and catching Ortheris by the collar. "Now where are ye, me son? Will ye take the wurrud av the Lorrd out av my mout' another time?" He shook him to emphasize the question.

"No, somethin' else, though," said Ortheris, making a dash at Mulvaney's pipe, capturing it, and holding it at arms-length; "I'll chuck it acrost the ditch if you don't let me go!"

"You maraudin' hathen! 'Tis the only cutty I iver loved. Handle her tinder or I'll chuck you acrost the nullah. If that poipe was bruk— Ah! Give her back to me, sorr!"

Ortheris had passed the treasure to my hand. It was an absolutely perfect clay, as shiny as the black ball at pool. I took it reverently, but I was firm.

"Will you tell us about the ghost-fight if I do?" I said.

"Is ut the shtory that's troublin' you? Av coorse I will. I mint to all along. I was only gettin' at ut my own way, as Popp Doggle said whin they found him thrying to ram a cartridge down the muzzle. Orth'ris, fall away!"

He released the little Londoner, took back his pipe, filled it, and his eyes twinkled. He has the most eloquent eyes of any one that I know.

"Did I iver tell you," he began, "that I was wanst the divil av a man?"

"You did," said Learoyd, with a childish gravity that

made Ortheris yell with laughter, for Mulvaney was always impressing upon us his merits in the old days.

"Did I iver tell you," Mulvaney continued, calmly, "that I was wanst more av a divil than I am now?"

"Mer—ria! You don't mean it?" said Ortheris.

"Whin I was corp'ril—I was rejuced aftherwards—but, as I say, whin I was corp'ril, I was a divil of a man."

He was silent for nearly a minute, while his mind rummaged among old memories and his eye glowed. He bit upon the pipe-stem and charged into his tale.

"Eyah! They was great times. I'm ould now; me hide's wore off in patches; sinthry-go has disconceited me, an' I'm a married man tu. But I've had my day, I've had my day, an' nothin' can take away the taste av that! Oh, my time past, whin I put me fut through ivry livin' wan av the Tin Commandmints between revelly and lights out, blew the froth off a pewter, wiped me mustache wid the back av me hand, an' slept on ut all as quiet as a little child! But ut's over—ut's over, an' 'twill niver come back to me; not though I prayed for a week av Sundays. Was there any wan in the ould rig'mint to touch Corp'ril Terence Mulvaney whin that same was turned out for sedukshin? I niver met him. Ivry woman that was not a witch was worth the runnin' afther in those days an' ivry man was my dearest frind or—I had stripped to him an' we knew which was the betther av the tu.

"Whin I was corp'ril I wud not ha' changed wid the colonel—no, nor yet the commander-in-chief. I wud be a sargint. There was nothin' I wud not be! Mother av Hivin, look at me! Fwhat am I now? But no matther! I must get to the other ghosts—not the wans in my ould head.

"We was quartered in a big cantonmint—'tis no manner av use namin' names, for ut might give the barricks disrepitation—an' I was the imperor av the earth to my own mind, an' wan or tu women thought the same. Small blame to thim. Afther we had lain there a year, Bragin, the color

sargint av E Comp'ny, wint an' took a wife that was lady's-maid to some big lady in the station. She's dead now, is Annie Bragin—died in child-bed at Kirpa Tal, or ut may ha' been Almorah—seven—nine years gone, an' Bragin he married ag'in. But she was a pretty woman whin Bragin inthrojuced her to cantonmint society. She had eyes like the brown av a buttherfly's wing whin the sun catches ut, an' a waist no thicker than my arm, an' a little sof' button av a mouth I wud ha' gone through all Asia bristlin' wid bay'nits to get the kiss av. An' her hair was as long as the tail av the colonel's charger—forgive me mintionin' that blunderin' baste in the same mouthful with Annie Bragin—but 'twas all shpun gold, an' time was whin a lock av ut was more than di'monds to me. There was niver pretty woman yet, an' I've had thruck wid a few, cud open the door to Annie Bragin.

" 'Twas in the Carth'lic chapel I saw her first, me oi rolling round as usual to see fwhat was to be seen. 'You're too good for Bragin, my love,' thinks I to mesilf, 'but that's a mistake I can put straight, or my name is not Terence Mulvaney.'

"Now take my wurrd for ut, you Orth'ris there an' Learoyd, an' kape out av the married quarters—as I did not. No good iver cooms av ut, an' there's always the chance av your bein' found wid your face in the dirt, a long picket in the back av your head, an' your hands playing the fifes on the tread av another man's doorstep. 'Twas so we found O'Hara, he that Rafferty killed six years gone, when he wint to his death wid his hair oiled, whistlin' 'Billy O'Rourke' betune his teeth. Kape out av the married quarters, I say, as I did not. 'Tis onwholesim, 'tis dangerous, an' 'tis ivrything else that's bad, but— Oh, my sowl, 'tis swate while ut lasts!

"I was always hangin' about there whin I was off duty an' Bragin wasn't, but niver a sweet word beyon' ordinar' did I get from Annie Bragin. ' 'Tis the pervarsity av the sect,' sez I to mesilf, an' gave my cap another cock on my

head an' straightened my back—'twas the back av a dhrum-major in those days—an' wint off as tho' I did not care, wid all the women in the married quarters laughin'. I was pershuaded—most bhoys are, I'm thinkin'—that no woman born av woman cud stand against me av I hild up me little finger. I had reason for thinkin' that way—till I met Annie Bragin.

"'Time an' ag'in whin I was blanhandherin' in the dusk a man wud go past me as quiet as a cat. 'That's quare,' thinks I, 'for I am, or I should be, the only man in these parts. Now what divilment can Annie be up to?' Thin I called myself a blayguard for thinkin' such things; but I thought thim all the same. An' that, mark you, is the way av a man.

"Wan evenin' I said: 'Mrs. Bragin, manin' no disrespect to you, who is that corp'ril man'—I had seen the stripes though I cud niver get sight av his face—'who is that corp'ril man that comes in always whin I'm goin' away?'

" 'Mother av God!' sez she, turnin' as white as my belt; 'have you seen him, too?'

" 'Seen him!' sez I; 'av coorse I have. Did ye want me not to see him, for'—we were standin' talkin' in the dhark, outside the veranda av Bragin's quarters—'you'd betther tell me to shut me eyes. Onless I'm mistaken, he's come now.'

"An', sure enough, the corp'ril man was walkin' to us, hangin' his head down as though he was ashamed av himself.

" 'Good-night, Mrs. Bragin,' sez I, very cool; ' 'tis not for me to interfere wid your *a-moors;* but you might manage these things wid more dacincy. I'm off to canteen,' I sez.

"I turned on my heel an' wint away, swearin' I wud give that man a dhressin' that wud shtop him messin' about the married quarters for a month an' a week. I had not tuk ten paces before Annie Bragin was hangin' on to my arm, an' I cud feel that she was shakin' all over.

" 'Stay wid me, Mister Mulvaney,' sez she; 'you're flesh an' blood, at the least—are ye not?'

"'I'm all that,' sez I, an' my anger wint away in a flash. 'Will I want to be asked twice, Annie?'

"Wid that I slipped my arm round her waist, for, begad, I fancied she had surrindered at discretion, an' the honors av war were mine.

"'Fwhat nonsince is this?' sez she, dhrawin' herself up on the tips av her dear little toes. 'Wid the mother's milk not dhry on your impident mouth? Let go!' she sez.

"'Did ye not say just now that I was flesh and blood?' sez I. 'I have not changed since,' I sez; an' I kep' my arm where ut was.

"'Your arms to yoursilf!' sez she, an' her eyes sparkild.

"'Sure, 'tis only human nature,' sez I; an' I kep' my arm where ut was.

"'Nature or no nature,' sez she, 'you take your arm away or I'll tell Bragin, an' he'll alter the nature av your head. Fwhat d'you take me for?' she sez.

"'A woman,' sez I; 'the prettiest in barricks.'

"'A wife,' sez she; 'the straightest in cantonmints!'

"Wid that I dropped my arm, fell back tu paces, an' saluted, for I saw that she mint fwhat she said."

"Then you know something that some men would give a good deal to be certain of. How could you tell?" I demanded, in the interests of science.

"'Watch the hand,' said Mulvaney; 'av she shuts her hand tight, thumb down over the knuckle, take up your hat an' go. You'll only make a fool av yourself av you shtay. But av the hand lies opin on the lap, or av you see her thrying' to shut ut, an' she can't—go on! She's not past reasonin' wid.'

"Well, as I was sayin', I fell back, saluted, an' was goin' away.

"'Shtay wid me,' she sez. 'Look! He's comin' again.'

"She pointed to the veranda, an', by the hoight av impart'nince, the corp'ril man was comin' out av Bragin's quarters.

"'He's done that these five evenin's past,' sez Annie Bragin. 'Oh, fwhat will I do?'

"'He'll not do ut again,' sez I, for I was fightin' mad.

"Kape away from a man that has been a thrifle crossed in love till the fever's died down. He rages like a brute baste.

"I wint up to the man in the veranda, manin', as sure as I sit, to knock the life out av him. He slipped into the open. 'Fwhat are you doin' philanderin' about here, ye scum av the gutter?' sez I, polite, to give him his warnin', for I wanted him ready.

"He niver lifted his head, but sez, all mournful an' melancolius, as if he thought I wud be sorry for him: 'I can't find her,' sez he.

"'My troth,' sez I, 'you've lived too long—you an' your seekin's an' findin's in a dacint married woman's quarters! Hould up your head, ye frozen thief av Genesis,' sez I, 'an' you'll find all you want an' more!'

"But he niver hild up, an' I let go from the shoulder to where the hair is short over the eyebrows.

"'That'll do your business,' sez I, but it nearly did mine instid. I put my body-weight behind the blow, but I hit nothing at all, an' near put my shoulther out. The corp'ril man was not there, an' Annie Bragin, who had been watchin' from the veranda, throws up her heels, an' carries on like a cock whin his neck's wrung by the dhrummher-bhoy. I wint back to her, for a livin' woman, an' a woman like Annie Bragin, is more than a p'rade-groun' full av ghosts. I'd never seen a woman faint before, an' I stud like a shtuck calf, askin' her whether she was dead, an' prayin' her for the love av me, an' the love av her husband, an' the love av the Virgin, to opin her blessed eyes again, an' callin' mesilf all the names undher the canopy av hivin for plaguin' her wid my miserable *a-moors* whin I ought to ha' stud betune her an' this corp'ril man that had lost the number av his mess.

"I misremimber fwhat nonsince I said, but I was not so

far gone that I cud not hear a fut on the dirt outside. 'Twas Bragin comin' in, an' by the same token Annie was comin' to. I jumped to the far end av the veranda an' looked as if butter wudn't melt in my mouth. But Mrs. Quinn, the quartermaster's wife that was, had tould Bragin about my hangin' round Annie.

" 'I'm not pleased wid you, Mulvaney,' sez Bragin, unbucklin' his sword, for he had been on duty.

" 'That's bad hearin',' I sez, an' I knew that the pickets were dhriven in. 'What for, sargint?' sez I.

" 'Come outside,' sez he, 'an' I'll show you why.'

" 'I am willin',' I sez; 'but my stripes are none so ould that I can afford to lose thim. Tell me now, who do I go out wid?' sez I.

"He was a quick man an' a just, an' saw fwhat I wud be afther. 'Wid Mrs. Bragin's husband,' sez he. He might ha' known by me askin' that favor that I had done him no wrong.

"We wint to the back av the arsenal an' I stripped to him, an' for ten minutes 'twas all I cud do to prevent him killin' himself against my fistes. He was mad as a dumb dog—just frothing wid rage; but he had no chanst wid me in reach, or learnin', or anything else.

" 'Will ye hear reason?' sez I, whin his first wind was runnin' out.

" 'Not whoile I can see,' sez he. Wid that I gave him both, one after the other, smash through the low gyard that he'd been taught whin he was a boy, an' the eyebrow shut down on the cheek-bone like the wing av a sick crow.

" 'Will you hear reason now, ye brave man?' sez I.

" 'Not whoile I can speak,' sez he, staggerin' up blind as a stump. I was loth to do ut, but I wint round an' swung into the jaw side-on an' shifted ut a half-pace to the lef'.

" 'Will ye hear reason now?' sez I; 'I can't keep my timper much longer, an' 'tis like I will hurt you.'

" 'Not whoile I can stand,' he mumbles out av one corner av his mouth. So I closed an' threw him—blind, dumb, an' sick, an' jammed the jaw straight.

"'You're an ould fool, Mister Bragin,' sez I.

"'You're a young thief,' sez he, 'an' you've bruk my heart, you an' Annie betune you!"

"Thin he began cryin' like a child as he lay. I was sorry as I had niver been before. 'Tis an awful thing to see a strong man cry.

"'I'll swear on the cross!' sez I.

"'I care for none av your oaths,' sez he.

"'Come back to your quarters,' sez I, 'an' if you don't believe the livin', begad, you shall listen to the dead,' I sez.

"I hoisted him an' tuk him back to his quarters. 'Mrs. Bragin,' sez I, 'here's a man that you can cure quicker than me.'

"'You've shamed me before my wife,' he whimpers.

"'Have I so?' sez I. 'By the look on Mrs. Bragin's face I think I'm in for a dhressin'-down worse than I gave you.'

"An' I was! Annie Bragin was woild wid indignation. There was not a name that a dacint woman cud use that was not given my way. I've had my colonel walk roun' me like a cooper roun' a cask for fifteen minuts in ord'ly-room bekaze I wint into the corner shop an unstrapped lewnatic, but all that I iver tuk from his rasp av a tongue was ginger-pop to fwhat Annie tould me. An' that, mark you, is the way av a woman.

"Whin ut was done for want av breath, an' Annie was bendin' over her husband, I sez: 'Tis all thrue, an' I'm a blayguard an' you're an honest woman; but will you tell him of wan service that I did you?'

"As I finished speakin' the corp'ril man came up to the veranda, an' Annie Bragin shquealed. The moon was up, an' we cud see his face.

"'I can't find her,' sez the corp'ril man, an' wint out like the puff av a candle.

"'Saints stand betune us an' evil!' sez Bragin, crossin' himself; 'that's Flahy av the Tyrone Rig'mint.'

"'Who was he?' I sez, 'for he has given me a dale av fightin' this day.'

"Bragin tould us that Flahy was a corp'ril who lost his wife av cholera in those quarters three years gone, an' wint mad, an' 'walked' afther they buried him, huntin' for her.

" 'Well,' sez I to Bragin, 'he's been hookin' out av purgathory to kape company wid Mrs. Bragin ivry evenin' for the last fortnight. You may tell Mrs. Quinn, wid my love, for I know that she's been talkin' to you, an' you've been listenin', that she ought to ondherstand the differ 'twixt a man an' a ghost. She's had three husbands,' sez I, 'an' you've got a wife too good for you. Instid av which you lave her to be boddered by ghosts an'—an' all manner av evil spirruts. I'll niver go talkin' in the way av politeness to a man's wife again. Good-night to you both,' sez I, an' wid that I wint away, havin' fought wid woman, man, an' divil all in the heart av an hour. By the same token I gave Father Victor wan rupee to say a mass for Flahy's soul, me havin' discommoded him by shticking my fist into his systim."

"Your ideas of politeness seem rather large, Mulvaney," I said.

"That's as you look at ut," said Mulvaney, calmly; "Annie Bragin niver cared for me. For all that, I did not want to leave anything behin' me that Bragin could take hould av to be angry wid her about—whin an honust wurrd cud ha' cleared all up. There's nothing like opin-speakin'. Orth'ris, ye scut, let me put me oi to that bottle, for my throat's as dhry as whin I thought I wud get a kiss from Annie Bragin. An, that's fourteen years gone! Eyah! Cork's own city an' the blue sky above ut—an' the times that was—the times that was!"

WITH THE MAIN GUARD

Der jungere Uhlanen
Sit round mit open mouth
While Breitmann tell dem stdories
Of fightin' in the South;
Und gif dem moral lessons,
How before der battle pops,
Take a little prayer to Himmel
Und a goot long drink of Schnapps.
—*Hans Breitmann's Ballads*

"MARY, Mother av Mercy, fwhat the divil possist us to take an' kape this melancolius counthry? Answer me that, sorr."

It was Mulvaney who was speaking. The hour was one o'clock of a stifling hot June night, and the place was the main gate of Fort Amara, most desolate and least desirable of all fortresses in India. What I was doing there at that hour is a question which only concerns McGrath, the sergeant of the guard, and the men on the gate.

"Slape," said Mulvaney, "is a shuparfluous necessity. This gyard'll shtay lively till relieved." He himself was stripped to the waist; Learoyd on the next bedstead was dripping from the skinful of water which Ortheris, arrayed only in white trousers, had just sluiced over his shoulders; and a fourth private was muttering uneasily as he dozed open-mouthed in the glare of the great guard-lantern. The heat under the bricked archway was terrifying.

"The worrst night that iver I remimber. Eyah! Is all hell loose this tide?" said Mulvaney. A puff of burning wind lashed through the wicket-gate like a wave of the sea, and Ortheris swore.

"Are ye more heasy, Jock?" he said to Learoyd. "Put yer 'ead between your legs. It'll go orf in a minute."

"Ah don't care. Ah would not care, but ma heart is plaayin' tivvy-tivvy on ma ribs. Let me die! Oh, leave me die!" groaned the huge Yorkshire man, who was feeling the heat acutely, being of fleshly build.

The sleeper under the lantern roused for a moment and raised himself on his elbow. "Die and be damned then!" he said. "I'm damned and I can't die!"

"Who's that?" I whispered, for the voice was new to me.

"Gentleman born," said Mulvaney; "corp'ril wan year, sargint nex'. Red-hot on his c'mission, but dhrinks like a fish. He'll be gone before the cowld weather's here. So!"

He slipped his boot, and with the naked toe just touched the trigger of his Martini. Ortheris misunderstood the movement, and the next instant the Irishman's rifle was dashed aside, while Ortheris stood before him, his eyes blazing with reproof.

"You!" said Ortheris. "My Gawd, you! If it was you, wot would we do?"

"Kape quiet, little man," said Mulvaney, putting him aside, but very gently: " 'tis not me, nor will ut be me whoile Dinah Shadd's here. I was but showin' something."

Learoyd, bowed on his bedstead, groaned, and the gentleman ranker sighed in his sleep. Ortheris took Mulvaney's tendered pouch, and we three smoked gravely for a space while the dust-devils danced on the glacis and scoured the red-hot plain without.

"Pop?" said Ortheris, wiping his forehead.

"Don't tantalize wid talkin' av dhrink, or I'll shtuff you into your own breech-block an' fire you off!" grunted Mulvaney.

Ortheris chuckled, and from a niche in the veranda produced six bottles of gingerade.

"Where did ye get ut, ye Machiavel?" said Mulvaney. " 'Tis no bazaar pop."

" 'Ow do Hi know wot the orf'cers drink?" answered Ortheris. "Arst the mess-man."

"Ye'll have a disthrict coort-martial settin' on ye yet, me son," said Mulvaney, "but"—he opened a bottle—"I will not report ye this time. Fwhat's in the mess-kid is mint for the belly, as they say, 'specially whin that mate is dhrink. Here's luck! A bloody war or a—no, we've got the sickly season. War, thin!"—he waved the innocent "pop" to the four quarters of heaven. "Bloody war! north, east, south, an' west! Jock, ye quakin' hayrick, come an' dhrink."

But Learoyd, half mad with fear of death presaged in the swelling veins of his neck, was imploring his Maker to strike him dead, and fighting for more air between his prayers. A second time Ortheris drenched the quivering body with water, and the giant revived.

"An' Ah divn't see thot a mon is i' fettle for gooin' on to live; an' Ah divn't see thot there is owt for t' livin' for. Hear now, lads! Ah'm tired—tired. There's nobbut watter i' ma bones. Let me die!"

The hollow of the arch gave back Learoyd's broken whisper in a bass boom. Mulvaney looked at me hopelessly, but I remembered how the madness of despair had once fallen upon Ortheris, that weary, weary afternoon on the banks of the Khemi River, and how it had been exorcised by the skillful magician Mulvaney.

"Talk, Terence!" I said, "or we shall have Learoyd slinging loose, and he'll be worse than Ortheris was. Talk! He'll answer to your voice."

Almost before Ortheris had deftly thrown all the rifles of the guard on Mulvaney's bedstead, the Irishman's voice was uplifted as that of one in the middle of a story, and, turning to me, he said:

"In barricks or out of it, as you say, sorr, an Oirish rig'mint is the divil an' more. 'Tis only fit for a young man wid eddicated fisteses. Oh, the crame av disruption is an Oirish rig'mint, an' rippin', tearin', ragin' scattherers in the field av war! My first rig'mint was Oirish—Faynians an' rebils to the heart av their marrow was they, an' so they fought for the widdy betther than most, bein' contrairy—

Oirrish. They was the Black Tyrone. You've heard av thim, sorr?"

Heard of them! I knew the Black Tyrone for the choicest collection of unmitigated blackguards, dog-stealers, robbers of hen-roosts, assaulters of innocent citizens, and recklessly daring heroes in the Army List. Half Europe and half Asia has had cause to know the Black Tyrone—good luck be with their tattered colors as glory has ever been!

"They was hot pickils an' ginger! I cut a man's head tu deep wid my belt in the days av my youth, an', afther some circumstances which I will oblitherate, I came to the ould rig'mint, bearin' the character av a man wid hands an' feet. But, as I was goin' to tell you, I fell acrost the Black Tyrone ag'in wan day whin we wanted thim powerful bad. Orth'ris, me son, fwhat was the name av that place where they sint wan comp'ny av us an' wan av the Tyrone roun' a hill an' down again, all for to tache the Paythans something they'd niver learned before? Afther Ghuzni 'twas."

"Don't know what the bloomin' Paythans called it. We called it Silver's Theayter. You know that, sure!"

"Silver's Theater—so 'twas. A gut betune two hills, as black as a bucket, an' as thin as a gurl's waist. There was overmany Paythans for our convaynience in the gut, an', begad, they called thimselves a reserve—bein' impident by natur! Our Scotchies an' lashins av Gurkys was poundin' into some Paythan rig'mints, I think 'twas. Scotchies an' Gurkys are twins bekaze they're so onlike, an' they get dhrunk together whin God plases. Well, as I was sayin', they sint wan comp'ny av the Ould an' wan av the Tyrone to double up the hill an' clane out the Paythan reserve. Orf'cers was scarce in thim days, fwhat wid dysintry an' not takin' care av thimselves, an' we was sint out wid only wan orf'cer for the comp'ny; but he was a man that had his feet beneath him, an' all his teeth in their sockuts."

"Who was he?" I asked.

"Captain O'Neil — Old Crook — Cruik-na-bulleen — him that I tould ye that tale av whin he was in Burmah. Hah!

He was a man. The Tyrone tuk a little orf'cer bhoy, but divil a bit was he in command, as I'll dimonstrate presintly. We an' they came over the brow av the hill, wan on each side av the gut, an' there was that ondacint reserve waitin' down below like rats in a pit.

"'Howld on, men,' sez Crook, who tuk a mother's care av us always. 'Rowl some rocks on thim by way av visitin'-kyards.' We hadn't rowled more than twinty bowlders, an' the Paythans was beginnin' to swear tremenjus, whin the little orf'cer bhoy av the Tyrone shqueaks out acrost the valley: 'Fwhat the devil an' all are you doin', shpoilin' the fun for my men? Do ye not see they'll stand?'

"'Faith, that's a rare pluckt wan!' sez Crook. 'Niver mind the rocks, men. Come along down an' take tay wid thim!'

"'There's damned little sugar in ut!' sez my rear-rank man; but Crook heard.

"'Have ye not all got spoons?' he sez, laughin', an' down we wint as fast as we cud. Learoyd bein' sick at the base, he, av coorse, was not there."

"Thot's a lie!" said Learoyd, dragging his bedstead nearer. "Ah gotten *thot* theer, an' you knaw it, Mulvaney." He threw up his arms, and from the right armpit ran, diagonally through the fell of his chest, a thin white line terminating near the fourth left rib.

"My mind's goin'," said Mulvaney, the unabashed. "Ye were there. Fwhat was I thinkin' of? 'Twas another man, av coorse. Well, you'll remimber thin, Jock, how we an' the Tyrone met wid a bang at the bottom an' got jammed past all movin' among the Paythans."

"Ow! It wos a tight 'ole. Hi was squeeged till I thought I'd bloomin' well bust,' said Ortheris, rubbing his stomach meditatively.

"'Twas no place for a little man, but wan little man"—Mulvaney put his hand on Ortheris's shoulder—"saved the life av me. There we shtuck, for divil a bit did the Paythans flinch, an' divil a bit dare we; our business bein' to clear 'em

out. An' the most exthryordinar' thing av all was that we an' they just rushed into each other's arrums, an' there was no firing for a long time. Nothin' but knife an' bay'nit when we cud get our hands free; that was not often. We was breast on to thim, an' the Tyrone was yelpin' behind av us in a way I didn't see the lean av at first. But I knew later, an' so did the Paythans.

"'Knee to knee!' sings out Crook, wid a laugh whin the rush av our comin' into the gut shtopped, an' he was huggin' a hairy great Paythan, neither bein' able to do anything to the other, tho' both was wishful.

"'Breast to breast!' he says, as the Tyrone was pushin' us forward closer an' closer.

"'An' hand over back!' sez a sargint that was behin'. I saw a sword lick out past Crook's ear like a snake's tongue, an' the Paythan was tuk in the apple av his throat like a pig at Dromeen fair.

"'Thank ye, Brother Inner Guard,' sez Crook, cool as a cucumber widout salt. 'I wanted that room.' An' he wint forward by the thickness av a man's body, havin' turned the Paythan undher him. The man bit the heel off Crook's boot in his death-bite.

"'Push, men!' sez Crook. 'Push, ye paper-backed beggars!' he sez. 'Am I to pull ye through?' So we pushed, an' we kicked, an' we swung, an' we swore, an' the grass bein' slippery, our heels wouldn't bite, an' God help the front-rank man that wint down that day!"

"'Ave you ever bin in the pit hentrance o' the Vic. on a thick night?" interrupted Ortheris. "It was worse nor that, for they was goin' one way, an' we wouldn't 'ave it. Leastaways, Hi 'adn't much to say."

"Faith, me son, ye said ut, thin. I kep' the little man betune my knees as long as I cud, but he was pokin' roun' wid his bay'nit, blindin' an' stiffin' feroshus. The devil of a man is Orth'ris in a ruction—aren't ye?" said Mulvaney.

"Don't make game!" said the cockney. "I knowed I wasn't no good then, but I guv 'em compot from the lef'

flank when we oponed out. No!" he said, bringing down his hand with a thump on the bedstead, "a bay'nit ain't no good to a little man—might as well 'ave a bloomin' fishin'-rod! I 'ate a clawin', maulin' mess, but gimme a breech that's wore out a bit, an' hamminition one year in store, to let the powder kiss the bullet, an' put me somewheres where I ain't trod on by 'ulkin swine like you, an', s'elp me Gawd, I could bowl you over five times outer seven at height 'undred. Would yer try, you lumberin' Hirishman?"

"No, ye wasp. I've seen ye do ut. I say there's nothin' better than the bay'nit, wid a long reach, a double twist av ye can, an' a slow recover."

"Dom the bay'nit," said Learoyd, who had been listening intently. "Look a-here!" He picked up a rifle an inch below the foresight with an underhanded action, and used it exactly as a man would use a dagger.

"Sitha," said he, softly, "thot's better than owt, for a mon can bash t' faace wi' thot, an', if he divn't, he can breeak t' forearm o' t' gaard. 'Tis not i' t' books, though. Gie me t' butt."

"Each does ut his own way, like makin' love," said Mulvaney, quietly; "the butt or the bay'nit or the bullet accordin' to the natur' av the man. Well, as I was sayin', we shtuck there breathin' in each other's faces an' swearin' powerful, Orth'ris cursin' the mother that bore him bekaze he was not three inches taller.

"Prisintly he sez: 'Duck, ye lump, an' I can get at a man over your shouldher!'

" 'You'll blow me head off,' I sez, throwin' my arm clear; 'go through under my armpit, ye bloodthirsty little scut,' sez I, 'but don't shtick me or I'll wring your ears round.'

"Fwhat was ut ye gave the Paythan man forninst me, him that cut at me whin I cudn't move hand or foot? Hot or cowld was ut?"

"Cold," said Ortheris, "up an' under the rib-jint. 'E come down flat. Best for you 'e did."

"Thrue, my son! This jam thing that I'm talkin' about lasted for five minutes good, an' thin we got our arms clear an' wint in. I misremimber exactly fwhat I did, but I didn't want Dinah to be a widdy at the Depot. Thin, after some promishkuous hackin' we shtuck again, an' the Tyrone behin' was callin' us dogs an' cowards an' all manner av names; we barrin' their way.

" 'Fwhat ails the Tyrone?' thinks I; 'they've the makin's av a most convanient fight here.'

"A man behind me sez beseechful an' in a whisper: 'Let me get at thim! For the love av Mary give me room beside ye, ye tall man!'

" 'An' who are you that's so anxious to be kilt?' sez I, widout turnin' my head, for the long knives was dancin' in front like the sun on Donegal Bay whin ut's rough.

" 'We've seen our dead,' he sez, squeezin' in to me; 'our dead that was men two days gone! An' me that was his cousin by blood could not bring Tim Coulan off! Let me get on,' he sez, 'let me get to thim or I'll run ye through the back!'

" 'My troth,' thinks I, 'if the Tyrone have seen their dead, God help the Paythans this day!' An' thin I knew why the Oirish was ragin' behind us as they was.

"I gave room to the man, an' he ran forward wid the Haymakers' Lift on his bay'nit an' swung a Paythan clear off his feet by the belly-band av the brute, an' the iron bruk at the lockin'-ring.

" 'Tim Coulan'll slape aisy to-night,' sez he wid a grin; an' the next minut his head was in two halves and he wint down grinnin' by sections.

"The Tyrone was pushin' an' pushin' in, an' our men was swearin' at thim, an' Crook was workin' away in front av us all, his sword-arm swingin' like a pump-handle an' his revolver spittin' like a cat. But the strange thing av ut was the quiet that lay upon. 'Twas like a fight in a drame—except for thim that was dead.

"Whin I gave room to the Oirishman I was expinded an'

forlorn in my inside. 'Tis a way I have, savin' your prisince, sorr, in action. 'Let me out, bhoys,' sez I, backin' in among thim. 'I'm goin' to be onwell!' Faith they gave me room at the wurrud, though they would not ha' given room for all hell wid the chill off. When I got clear, I was, savin' your presince, sorr, outragis sick bekaze I had dhrunk heavy that day.'

"Well, an' far out av harm was a sargint av the Tyrone sittin' on the little orf'cer bhoy who had stopped Crook from rowlin' the rocks. Oh, he was a beautiful bhoy, an' the long black curses was sliding out av his innicint mouth like mornin'-jew from a rose!

" 'Fwhat have you got there?' sez I to the sargint.

" 'Wan av her majesty's bantams wid his spurs up,' sez he. 'He's goin' to coort-martial me.'

" 'Let me go!' sez the little orf'cer bhoy. 'Let me go and command my men!' mainin' thereby the Black Tyrone, which was beyond any command—ay, even av they had made the divil a field-orf'cer.

" 'His father howlds my mother's cow-feed in Clonmel,' sez the man that was sittin' on him. 'Will I go back to his mother an' tell her that I've let him throw himself away? Lie still, ye little pinch av dynamite, an' coort-martial me aftherwards.'

" 'Good,' sez I; ' 'tis the likes av him makes the likes av the commandher-in-chief, but we must presarve thim. Fwhat d'you want to do, sorr?' sez I, very politely.

" 'Kill the beggars—kill the beggars!' he shqueaks; his big blue eyes fairly brimmin' wid tears.

" 'An' how'll ye do that?' sez I. 'You've shquibbed off your revolver like a child wid a cracker; you can make no play wid that fine large sword av yours; an' your hand's shakin' like an asp on a leaf. Lie still and grow,' sez I.

" 'Get back to your comp'ny,' sez he; 'you're insolint!'

" 'All in good time,' sez I, 'but I'll have a dhrink first.'

"Just thin Crook comes up, blue an' white all over where he wasn't red.

"'Wather!' sez he; 'I'm dead wid drouth! Oh, but it's a gran' day!'

"He dhrank half a skinful, and the rest he tilts into his chest, an' it fair hissed on the hairy hide av him. He sees the little orf'cer bhoy undher the sargint.

"'Fwhat's yonder?' sez he.

"'Mutiny, sorr,' sez the sargint, an' the orf'cer bhoy begins pleadin' pitiful to Crook to be let go; but divil a bit wud Crook budge.

"'Kape him there,' he sez, 'tis no child's work this day. By the same token,' sez he, 'I'll confishcate that iligant nickel-plated scent-sprinkler av yours, for my own has been vomitin' dishgraceful!'

"The fork av his hand was black wid the backspit av the machine. So he tuk the orf'cer bhoy's revolver. Ye may look, sorr, but, by my faith, there's a dale more done in the field than iver gets into field ordhers!

"'Come on, Mulvaney,' sez Crook; 'is this a coort-martial?' The two av us wint back together into the mess an' the Paythans were still standin' up. They was not too impart'nint though, for the Tyrone was callin' wan to another to remimber Tim Coulan.

"Crook stopped outside av the strife an' looked anxious, his eyes rowlin' roun'.

"'Fwhat is ut, sorr?' sez I; 'can I get ye anything?'

"'Where's a bugler?' sez he.

"I wint into the crowd—our men was dhrawin' breath behin' the Tyrone who was fightin' like sowls in tormint—an' prisintly I came acrost little Frehan, our bugler bhoy, pokin' roun' among the best wid a rifle an' bay'nit.

"'Is amusin' yoursilf fwhat you're paid for, ye limb?' sez I, catchin' him by the scruff. 'Come out av that an' attind to your duty,' I sez; but the bhoy was not pleased.

"'I've got wan,' sez he, grinin', 'big as you, Mulvaney, an' fair half as ugly. Let me go get another.'

"I was dishpleased at the personability av that remark, so I tucks him under my arm an' carries him to Crook, who

was watchin' how the fight wint. Crook cuffs him till the bhoy cries, an' thin sez nothin' for a whoile.

"The Paythans began to flicker onaisy, an' our men roared. 'Opin ordher! Double!' sez Crook. 'Blow, child, blow for the honor av the British arrmy!'

"That bhoy blew like a typhoon, an' the Tyrone an' we opined out as the Paythans broke, an' I saw that fwhat had gone before wud be kissin' an' huggin' to fwhat was to come. We'd dhruv thim into a broad part av the gut whin they gave, an' thin we opined out an' fair danced down the valley, dhrivin' thim before us. Oh, 'twas lovely, an' stiddy, too! There was the sargints on the flanks av what was left av us, kapin' touch, an' the fire was runnin' from flank to flank, an' the Paythans was dhroppin'. We opined out wid the widenin' av the valley, an' whin the valley narrowed we closed again like the shticks on a lady's fan, an' at the far ind av the gut, where they thried to stand, we fair blew them off their feet, for we had expinded very little ammunition by reason av the knife work."

"Hi used thirty rounds goin' down that valley," said Ortheris, "an' it was gentleman's work. Might 'a' done it in a white 'andkerchief an' pink silk stockin's, that part. Hi was on in that piece."

"You could ha' heard the Tyrone yellin' a mile away," said Mulvaney, "an' 'twas all their sargints cud do to get thim off. They was mad—mad—mad! Crook sits down in the quiet that fell whin we had gone down the valley, an' covers his face wid his hands. Prisintly we all came back again accordin' to our natures and disposishins, for they, mark you, show through the hide av a man in that hour.

" 'Bhoys! bhoys!' sez Crook to himself. 'I misdoubt we could ha' engaged at long range an' saved betther men than me.' He looked at our dead an' said no more.

" 'Captain dear,' sez a man av the Tyrone, comin' up wid his mouth bigger than iver his mother kissed ut, spittin' blood like a whale; 'captain dear,' sez he, 'if wan or two in

the sthalls have been discommoded, the gallery have enjoyed the performinces av a Roshus.'

"Thin I knew that man for the Dublin dock-rat he was—wan av the bhoys that made the lessee av Silver's Theater gray before his time wid tearin' out the bowils av the benches an' t'rowin' thim into the pit. So I passed the wurrud that I knew when I was in the Tyrone an' we lay in Dublin. 'I don't know who 'twas,' I whispers, 'an' I don't care, but any ways I'll knock the face av you, Tim Kelley.'

" 'Eyah!' sez the man, 'was you there, too? We'll call ut Silver's Theater.' Half the Tyrone, knowin' the ould place, tuk ut up: so we called ut Silver's Theater.

"The little orf'cer bhoy av the Tyrone was thrimblin' an' cryin'. He had no heart for the coort-martials that he talked so big upon. 'Ye'll do well later,' sez Crook, very quiet, 'for not bein' allowed to kill yourself for amusemint.'

" 'I'm a dishgraced man!' sez the little orf'cer bhoy.

" 'Put me undher arrest, sorr, if you will, but, by my cowl, I'd do ut again sooner than face your mother wid you dead,' sez the sargint that had sat on his head, standin' to attention an' salutin'. But the young wan only cried as tho' his little heart was breakin'.

"Thin another man av the Tyrone came up, wid the fog av fightin' on him."

"The what, Mulvaney?"

"Fog av fightin'. You know, sorr, that, like makin' love, ut takes each man diff'rint. Now, I can't help bein' powerful sick whin I'm in action. Orth'ris, here, niver stops swearin' from ind to ind, an' the only time that Learoyd opins his mouth to sing is whin he is messin' wid other people's heads; for he's a dhirty fighter is Jock Learoyd. Recruities sometime cry, an' sometime they don't know fwhat they do, an' sometime they are all for cuttin' throats, an' such like dirtiness; but some men get heavy-dead-dhrunk on the fightin'. This man was. He was staggerin', an' his eyes were half shut, an' we cud hear him dhraw breath

twinty yards away. He sees the little orf'cer bhoy, an' comes up, talkin' thick an' drowsy to himsilf. 'Blood the young whelp!' he sez: 'blood the young whelp;' an' wid that he threw up his arms, shpun roun', an' dropped at our feet, dead as a Paythan, an' there was niver sign or scratch on him. They said 'twas his heart was rotten, but oh, 'twas a quare thing to see!

"Thin we wint to bury our dead, for we wud not lave them to the Paythans, an' in movin' among the haythen we nearly lost that little orf'cer bhoy. He was for givin' wan divil wather and layin' him aisy against a rock. 'Be careful, sorr,' sez I; 'a wounded Paythan's worse than a live wan.' My troth, before the words was out of my mouth the man on the ground fires at the orf'cer bhoy lanin' over him, an' I saw the helmit fly. I dropped the butt on the face av the man an' tuk his pistol. The little orf'cer bhoy turned very white, for the hair av half his head was singed away.

" 'I tould you so, sorr!' sez I; an' afther that, whin he wanted to help a Paythan I stud wid the muzzle contagious to the ear. They dare not do anythin' but curse. The Tyrone was growlin' like dogs over a bone that has been taken away too soon, for they had seen their dead an' they wanted to kill ivry sowl on the ground. Crook tould thim that he'd blow the hide off any man that misconducted himself; but, seeing that ut was the first time the Tyrone had iver seen their dead, I do not wondher they were on the sharp. 'Tis a shameful sight! Whin I first saw ut I wud niver ha' given quarter to any man north of the Khaibar—no, nor woman either, for the women used to come out afther dhark—*Auggrh!*

"Well, evenshually we buried our dead an' tuk away our wounded, an' come over the brow av the hills to see the Scotchies an' the Gurkys taking tay with the Paythans in bucketsfuls. We were a gang av dissolute ruffians, for the blood had caked the dust, an' the sweat had cut the cake, an' our bay'nits was hangin' like butcher's steels betune ur legs, an' most av us were marked one way or another.

"A staff orf'cer man, clean as a new rifle, rides up an' sez: 'What damned scarecrows are you?'

" 'A company av her Majesty's Black Tyrone, an' wan av the ould rig'mint,' sez Crook very quiet, givin' our visitors the flure as 'twas.

" 'Oh!' sez the staff orf'cer; 'did you dislodge that reserve?'

" 'No!' sez Crook, an' the Tyrone laughed.

" 'Thin fwhat the divil have ye done?'

" 'Disthroyed ut,' sez Crook, an' he took us on, but not before Toomey that was in the Tyrone sez aloud, his voice somewhere in his stummick: 'Fwhat in the name av misfortune does this parrit widout a tail mane by shtoppin' the road av his betthers?'

"The staff orf'cer wint blue, and Toomey makes him pink by changin' to the voice av a minowderin' woman an' sayin': 'Come an' kiss me, major dear, for me husband's at the wars, an' I'm all alone at the depot.'

"The staff orf'cer wint away, an' I cud see Crook's shoulthers shakin'.

"His corp'ril checks Toomey. 'Lave me alone,' sez Toomey, widout a wink. 'I was his bâtman before he was married an' he knows fwhat I mane, av you don't. There's nothin' like livin' in the hoight av society.' D'you remimber that, Orth'ris!"

"Hi do, Toomey, 'e died in 'orspital, next week it was, 'cause I bought 'arf his kit; an' I remember after that—"

"GUARD, TURN OUT!"

The relief had come; it was four o'clock. "I'll catch a kyart for you, sorr," said Mulvaney, diving hastily into his accouterments. "Come up to the top av the fort an' we'll pershue our invistigations into McGrath's shtable." The relieved guard strolled round the main bastion on its way to the swimming-bath, and Learoyd grew almost talkative. Ortheris looked into the fort ditch and across the plain. "Ho! it's weary waitin' for Ma-ary!" he hummed; "but I'd like to kill some more bloomin' Paythans before my

time's up. War! Bloody war! North, east, south, and west."

"Amen," said Learoyd, slowly.

"Fwhat's here?" said Mulvaney, checking at a blur of white by the foot of the old sentry box. He stooped and touched it. "It's Norah—Norah McTaggart! Why, Nonie darlin', fwhat are ye doin' out av your mother's bed at this time?"

The two-year-old child of Sergeant McTaggart must have wandered for a breath of cool air to the very verge of the parapet of the fort ditch. Her tiny night-shift was gathered into a wisp round her neck and she moaned in her sleep. "See there!" said Mulvaney; "poor lamb! Look at the heat-rash on the innocint skin av her. 'Tis hard—crool hard even for us. Fwhat must it be for these? Wake up, Nonie, your mother will be woild about you. Begad, the child might ha' fallen into the ditch!"

He picked her up in the growing light, and set her on his shoulder, and her fair curls touched the grizzled stubble of his temples. Ortheris and Learoyd followed snapping their fingers, while Norah smiled at them a sleepy smile. Then caroled Mulvaney, clear as a lark, dancing the baby on his arm:

"If any young man should marry you,
Say nothin' about the joke;
That iver ye slep' in a sinthry box,
Wrapped up in a soldier's cloak."

"Though, on my sowl, Nonie," he said, gravely, "there was not much cloak about you. Niver mind, you won't dhress like this ten years to come. Kiss your friends an' run along to your mother."

Nonie, set down close to the married quarters, nodded with the quiet obedience of the soldier's child, but, ere she pattered off over the flagged path, held up her lips to be kissed by the three musketeers. Ortheris wiped his mouth with the back of his hand and swore sentimentally; Learoyd turned pink; and the two walked away together. The York-

shireman lifted up his voice and gave in thunder the chorus of "The Sentry Box," while Ortheris piped at his side.

" 'Bin to a bloomin' sing-song, you two?" said the artilleryman, who was taking his cartridge down to the Morning Gun. "You're overmerry for these dashed days.'

"I bid ye take care o' the brat, said he,
For it comes of a noble race,"

bellowed Learoyd. The voices died out in the swimming-bath.

"Oh, Terence!" I said, dropping into Mulvaney's speech, when we were alone, "it's you that have the tongue!"

He looked at me wearily; his eyes were sunk in his head, and his face was drawn and white. "Eyah!" said he; "I've blandandhered thim through the night somehow, but can thim that helps others help themselves? Answer me that, sorr!"

And over the bastions of Fort Amara broke the pitiless day.

IN THE MATTER OF A PRIVATE

Hurrah! hurrah! a soldier's life for me!
Shout, boys, shout! for it makes you jolly and free.
—*The Ramrod Corps*

People who have seen, state that one of the quaintest spectacles of human frailty is an outbreak of hysterics in a girls' school. It starts without warning, generally on a hot afternoon, among the elder pupils. A girl giggles till the giggle gets beyond control. Then she throws up her head, and cries: "Honk, honk, honk," like a wild goose, and tears mix with the laughter. If the mistress be wise, she will say something severe at this point to check matters. If she be tender-hearted, and send for a drink of water, the chances are largely in favor of another girl laughing at the afflicted

one and herself collapsing. Thus the trouble spreads, and may end in half of what answers to the lower sixth of a boys' school rocking and whooping together. Given a week of warm weather, two stately promenades per diem, a heavy mutton and rice meal in the middle of the day, a certain amount of nagging from the teachers, and a few other things, some really amazing effects can be secured. At least, this is what folk say who have had experience.

Now, the mother superior of a convent and the colonel of a British infantry regiment would be justly shocked at any comparison being made between their respective charges. But it is a fact that, under certain circumstances, Thomas in bulk can be worked up into ditthering, rippling hysteria. He does not weep, but he shows his trouble unmistakably, and the consequences get into the newspapers, and all the good and virtuous people who hardly know a Martini from a Snider say: "Take away the brute's ammunition!"

Thomas isn't a brute, and his business, which is to look after the virtuous people, demands that he shall have his ammunition to his hand. He doesn't wear silk stockings, and he really ought to be supplied with a new adjective to help him to express his opinions: but, for all that, he is a great man. If you call him "the heroic defender of the national honor" one day, and "a brutal and licentious soldiery" the next, you naturally bewilder him, and he looks upon you with suspicion. There is nobody to speak for Thomas except people who have theories to work off on him; and nobody understands Thomas except Thomas, and he does not know what is the matter with himself.

That is the prologue. This is the story:

Corporal Slane was engaged to be married to Miss Jhansi McKenna, whose history is well known in the regiment and elsewhere. He had secured his colonel's leave, and, being popular with the men, every arrangement had been made to give the wedding what Private Ortheris called "eeklar." It fell in the heart of the hot weather, and, after the wedding, Slane was going up to the hills with the bride. None the

less, Slane's grievance was that the affair would be only a hired carriage wedding, and he felt that the "eeklar" of that was meager. Miss McKenna did not care so much. The sergeant's wife was helping her to make her wedding-dress, and she was very busy. Slane was, just then, the only moderately contented man in barracks. All the rest were more or less miserable.

And they had so much to make them happy, too! All their work was over at eight in the morning, and for the rest of the day they could lie on their backs and smoke canteen plug and swear at the punkah-coolies. They enjoyed a fine, full flesh meal in the middle of the day, and then threw themselves down on their cots and sweated and slept till it was cool enough to go out with their "towny," whose vocabulary contained less than six hundred words, and the adjective, and whose views on every conceivable question they had heard many months before.

There was the canteen, of course, and there was the temperance-room with the second-hand papers in it; but a man of any profession cannot read for eight hours a day in a temperature of ninety-six or ninety-eight degrees in the shade, running up sometimes to one hundred and three degrees at midnight. Very few men, even though they get a pannikin of flat, stale, muddy beer and hide it under their cots, can continue drinking for six hours a day. One man tried, but he died, and nearly the whole regiment went to his funeral because it gave them something to do. It was too early for the modified excitement of fever or cholera. The men could only wait and wait and wait, and watch the shadow of the barrack creeping across the blinding white dust. That was a gay life!

They lounged about cantonments—it was too hot for any sort of game, and almost too hot for vice—and fuddled themselves in the evening, and filled themselves to distension with the healthy nitrogenous food provided for them, and the more they stoked the less exercise they took and more explosive they grew. Then the tempers began to wear away, and

men fell a-brooding over insults real or imaginary. They had nothing else to think of. The tone of the "repartees" changed, and instead of saying, light-heartedly, "I'll knock your silly face in," men grew laboriously polite and hinted that the cantonments were not big enough for themselves and their enemy, and that there would be more space for one of the two in a place which it is not polite to mention.

It may have been the devil who arranged the thing, but the fact of the case is that Losson had for a long time been worrying Simmons in an aimless way. It gave him occupation. The two men had their cots side by side, and would sometimes spend a long afternoon swearing at each other; but Simmons was afraid of Losson and dared not challenge him to a fight. He thought over the words in the hot still nights, and half the hate he felt toward Losson he vented on the wretched punkah-coolie.

Losson bought a parrot in the bazaar, and put it into a little cage, and lowered the cage into the cool darkness of a well, and sat on the well-curb, shouting bad language down to the parrot. He taught it to say: "Simmons, ye *so-oor*," which means swine, and several other things entirely unfit for publication. He was a big gross man, and he shook like a jelly when the parrot caught the sentence correctly. Simmons, however, shook with rage, for all the room were laughing at him—the parrot was such a disreputable puff of green feathers and looked so human when it chattered. Losson used to sit, swinging his fat legs, on the side of the cot, and ask the parrot what it thought of Simmons. The parrot would answer: "Simmons, ye *so-oor*." "Good boy," Losson used to say, scratching the parrot's head; "ye 'ear that, Sim?" And Simmons used to turn over on his stomach and make answer: "I 'ear. Take 'eed you don't 'ear something one of these days."

In the restless nights, after he had been asleep all day, fits of blind rage came upon Simmons and held him till he trembled all over, while he thought in how many different ways he would slay Losson. Sometimes he would picture

himself trampling the life out of the man, with heavy ammunition boots, and at others smashing in his face with the butt, and at others jumping on his shoulders and dragging the head back till the neck-bone cracked. Then his mouth would feel hot and fevered, and he would reach out for another sup of the beer in the pannikin.

But the fancy that came to him most frequently and stayed with him longest was one connected with the great roll of fat under Losson's right ear. He noticed it first on a moonlight night, and thereafter it was always before his eyes. It was a fascinating roll of fat. A man could get his hand upon it and tear away one side of the neck; or he could place the muzzle of a rifle on it and blow away all the head in a flash. Losson had no right to be sleek and contented and well-to-do, when he, Simmons, was the butt of the room. Some day, perhaps, he would show those who laughed at the "Simmons, ye *so-oor*" joke, that he was as good as the rest, and held a man's life in the crook of his forefinger. When Losson snored, Simmons hated him more bitterly than ever. Why should Losson be able to sleep when Simmons had to stay awake hour after hour, tossing and turning on the tapes, with the dull pain gnawing into his right side and his head throbbing and aching after canteen? He thought over this for many nights, and the world became unprofitable to him. He even blunted his naturally fine appetite with beer and tobacco; and all the while the parrot talked at and made a mock of him.

The heat continued and the tempers wore away more quickly than before. A sergeant's wife died of heat-apoplexy in the night, and the rumor ran abroad that it was cholera. Men rejoiced openly, hoping that it would spread and send them into camp. But that was a false alarm.

It was late on a Tuesday evening, and the men were waiting in the deep double verandas for "last posts," when Simmons went to the box at the foot of his bed, took out his pipe, and slammed the lid down with a bang that echoed through the deserted barrack like the crack of a rifle. Ordi-

narily speaking, the men would have taken no notice; but their nerves were fretted to fiddle-strings. They jumped up, and three or four clattered into the barrack-room only to find Simmons kneeling by his box.

"Ow! It's you, is it?" they said, and laughed foolishly; "we thought 'twas—"

Simmons rose slowly. If the accident had so shaken his fellows, what would not the reality do?

"You thought it was—did you? And what makes you think?" he said, lashing himself into madness as he went on; "to hell with your thinking, ye dirty spies."

"Simmons, ye *so-oor*," chuckled the parrot in the veranda, sleepily, recognizing a well-known voice. And that was absolutely all.

The tension snapped. Simmons fell back on the arm-rack deliberately—the men were at the far end of the room—and took out his rifle and packet of ammunition. "Don't go playing the goat, Sim!" said Losson; "put it down," but there was a quaver in his voice. Another man stooped, slipped his boot and hurled it at Simmons's head. The prompt answer was a shot which, fired at random, found its billet in Losson's throat. Losson fell forward without a word, and the others scattered.

"You thought it was!" yelled Simmons. "You're drivin' me to it! I tell you you're drivin' me to it! Get up, Losson, an' don't lie shammin' there—you an' your blasted parrit that druv me to it!"

But there was an unaffected reality about Losson's pose that showed Simmons what he had done. The men were still clamoring in the veranda. Simmons appropriated two more packets of ammunition and ran into the moonlight, muttering; "I'll make a night of it. Thirty roun's, an' the last for myself. Take you that, you dogs!"

He dropped on one knee and fired into the brown of the men in the veranda, but the bullet flew high, and landed in the brickwork with a vicious "phwit" that made some of the younger men turn pale. It is, as mus-

ketry theorists observe, one thing to fire and another to be fired at.

Then the instinct of the chase flared up. The news spread from barrack to barrack, and the men doubled out intent on the capture of Simmons, the wild beast, who was heading for the cavalry parade-ground, stopping now and again to send back a shot and a curse in the direction of his pursuers.

"I'll learn you to spy on me!" he shouted; "I'll learn you to give me dorg's names! Come on the 'ole lot o' you! Colonel John Anthony Deever, C.B.!"—he turned toward the infantry mess and shook his rifle—"you think yourself the devil of a man—but I tell you that if you put your ugly old carcass outside o' that door, I'll make you the poorest-lookin' man in the army. Come out, Colonel John Anthony Deever, C.B.! Come out and see me practiss on the rainge. I'm the crack shot of the 'ole bloomin' battalion." In proof of which statement Simmons fired at the lighted windows of the mess-house.

"Private Simmons, E Comp'ny, on the cavalry p'rade-ground, sir, with thirty rounds," said a sergeant, breathlessly, to the colonel. "Shootin' right and lef', sir. Shot Private Losson. What's to be done, sir?"

Colonel John Anthony Deever, C.B., sallied out, only to be saluted by a spurt of dust at his feet.

"Pull up!" said the second in command; "I don't want my step in that way, colonel. He's as dangerous as a mad dog!"

"Shoot him like one, then," said the colonel, bitterly, "if he won't take his chance. My regiment, too! If it had been the Towheads I could have understood."

Private Simmons had occupied a strong position near a well on the edge of the parade-ground, and was defying the regiment to come on. The regiment was not anxious to comply with the request, for there is small honor in being shot by a fellow-private. Only Corporal Slane, rifle in hand, threw himself down on the ground, and wormed his way toward the well.

"Don't shoot," said he to the men round him; "like as not you'll 'it me. I'll catch the beggar, livin'!"

Simmons ceased shouting for a while, and the noise of trap-wheels could be heard across the plain. Major Oldyne, commanding the horse battery, was coming back from a dinner in the civil lines; was driving after his usual custom—that is to say, as fast as the horse could go.

"A orf'cer! A blooming spangled orf'cer!" shrieked Simmons; "I'll make a scarecrow of that orf'cer!" The trap stopped.

"What's this?" demanded the major of gunners. "You there, drop your rifle!"

"Why, it's Jerry Blazes! I ain't got no quarrel with you, Jerry Blazes. Pass, frien', an' all's well!"

But Jerry Blazes had not the faintest intention of passing a dangerous murderer. He was, as his adoring battery swore long and fervently, without knowledge of fear, and they were surely the best judges, for Jerry Blazes, it was notorious, had done his possible to kill a man each time the battery went out.

He walked toward Simmons, with the intention of rushing him, and knocking him down.

"Don't make me do it, sir," said Simmons; "I ain't got nothing agin you. Ah! you would?"—the major broke into a run—"Take that then!"

The major dropped with a bullet through his shoulder, and Simmons stood over him. He had lost the satisfaction of killing Losson in the desired way; but here was a helpless body to his hand. Should he slip in another cartridge, and blow off the head, or with the butt smash in the white face? He stopped to consider, and a cry went up from the far side of the parade-ground: "He's killed Jerry Blazes!" But in the shelter of the well-pillars Simmons was safe, except when he stepped out to fire. "I'll blow yer 'andsome 'ead off, Jerry Blazes," said Simmons, reflectively; "six an' three is nine an' one is ten, an' that leaves me another nineteen, an' one for myself." He tugged at the string of the second

packet of ammunition. Corporal Slane crawled out of the shadow of a bank into the moonlight.

"I see you!" said Simmons; "come a bit furder on an' I'll do for you."

"I'm comin'," said Corporal Slane, briefly; "you done a bad day's work, Sim. Come out 'ere an' come back with me."

"Come to—" laughed Simmons, sending a cartridge home with his thumb. "Not before I've settled you an' Jerry Blazes."

The corporal was lying at full length in the dust of the parade-ground, a rifle under him. Some of the less cautious men in the distance shouted:

"Shoot 'im! Shoot 'im, Slane!"

"You move 'and or foot, Slane," said Simmons, "an' I'll kick Jerry Blazes's 'ead in, and shoot you after."

"I ain't movin'," said the corporal, raising his head; "you daren't 'it a man on 'is legs. Let go o' Jerry Blazes an' come out o' that with your fistes. Come an' 'it me. You daren't, you bloomin' dog-shooter!"

"I dare."

"You lie, you man-sticker. You sneakin', sheeny butcher, you lie! See there!" Slane kicked the rifle away, and stood up in the peril of his life. "Come on, now!"

The temptation was more than Simmons could resist, for the corporal in his white clothes offered a perfect mark.

"Don't misname me," shouted Simmons, firing as he spoke. The shot missed, and the shooter, blind with rage, threw his rifle down and rushed at Slane from the protection of the well. Within striking distance he kicked savagely at Slane's stomach, but the weedy corporal knew something of Simmons's weakness, and knew, too, the deadly guard for that kick. Bowing forward, and drawing up his right leg till the heel of the right foot was set some three inches above the inside of the left knee-cap, he met the blow standing on one leg—exactly as Gonds stand when they meditate—and ready for the fall that would follow. There was an oath,

the corporal fell over to his own left as shinbone met shinbone, and the private collapsed, his right leg broken an inch above the ankle.

"Pity you don't know that guard, Sim," said Slane, spitting out the dust as he rose. Then raising his voice: "Come an' take him orf. I've bruk 'is leg." This was not strictly true, for the private had accomplished his own downfall, since it is the special merit of that leg-guard that the harder the kick the greater the kicker's discomfiture.

Slane walked to Jerry Blazes and hung over him with exaggerated solicitude, while Simmons, weeping with pain, was carried away. " 'Ope you ain't 'urt badly, sir," said Slane. The major had fainted, and there was an ugly, ragged hole through the top of his arm. Slane knelt down and murmured: "S'elp me, I believe 'e's dead. Well, if that ain't my blooming luck all over!"

But the major was destined to lead his battery afield for many a long day with unshaken nerve. He was removed, and nursed and petted into convalescence, while the battery discussed the wisdom of capturing Simmons, and blowing him from a gun. They idolized their major, and his reappearance on parade resulted in a scene nowhere provided for in the army regulations.

Great, too, was the glory that fell to Slane's share. The gunners would have made him drunk thrice a day for at least a fortnight. Even the colonel of his own regiment complimented him upon his coolness, and the local paper called him a hero. Which things did not puff him up. When the major proffered him money and thanks, the virtuous corporal took the one and put aside the other. But he had a request to make and prefaced it with many a "Beg y' pardon, sir." Could the major see his way to letting the Slane-McKenna wedding be adorned by the presence of four battery horses to pull a hired barouche? The major could, and so could the battery. Excessively so. It was a gorgeous wedding.

. . . . . .

"Wot did I do it for?" said Corporal Slane. "For the 'orses o' course. Jhansi ain't a beauty to look at, but I wasn't goin' to 'ave a hired turnout. Jerry Blazes? If I 'adn't 'a' wanted something, Sim might ha' blowed Jerry Blazes' blooming 'ead into Hirish stew for aught I'd 'a' cared."

And they hanged Private Simmons—hanged him as high as Haman in hollow square of the regiment; and the colonel said it was drink; and the chaplain was sure it was the devil; and Simmons fancied it was both, but he didn't know, and only hoped his fate would be a warning to his companions; and half a dozen "intelligent publicists" wrote six beautiful leading articles on "The Prevalence of Crime in the Army."

But not a soul thought of comparing the "bloody-minded Simmons" to the squawking, gaping, schoolgirl with which this story opens.

That would have been too absurd!

BLACK JACK

To the wake av Tim O'Hara
Came company,
All St. Patrick's Alley
Was there to see.
—*The Wake of Tim O'Hara*

THERE is a writer called Mr. Robert Louis Stevenson, who makes most delicate inlay-work in black and white, and files out to the fraction of a hair. He has written a story about a suicide club, wherein men gambled for death, because other amusements did not bite sufficiently. My friend Private Mulvaney knows nothing about Mr. Stevenson, but he once assisted informally at a meeting of almost such a club as that gentleman has described; and his words are true.

As the Three Musketeers share their silver, tobacco, and

liquor together, as they protect each other in barracks or camp, and as they rejoice together over the joy of one, so do they divide their sorrows. When Ortheris's irrepressible tongue has brought him into cells for a season, or Learoyd has run amuck through his kit and accouterments, or Mulvaney has indulged in strong waters, and under their influence reproved his commanding officer, you can see the trouble in the faces of the untouched twain. And the rest of the regiment know that comment or jest is unsafe. Generally the three avoid orderly-room and the corner shop that follows, leaving both to the young bloods who have not sown their wild oats; but there are occasions . . . For instance, Ortheris was sitting on the drawbridge of the main gate of Fort Amara, with his hands in his pockets and his pipe, bowl down, in his mouth. Learoyd was lying at full-length on the turf of the glacis, kicking his heels in the air, and I came round the corner and asked for Mulvaney.

Ortheris spat into the ditch and shook his head. "No good seein' 'im now," said Ortheris; 'e's a bloomin' camel. Listen."

I heard on the flags of the veranda opposite to the cells, which are close to the guard-room, a measured step that I could have identified in the tramp of an army. There were twenty paces *crescendo*, a pause, and then twenty *diminuendo*.

"That's 'im," said Ortheris; "my Gawd, that's 'im! All for a bloomin' button you could see your face in an' a bit o' lip that a bloomin' harkangel would 'a' guv back."

Mulvaney was doing pack-drill—was compelled, that is to say, to walk up and down for certain hours in full marching order, with rifle, bayonet, ammunition, knapsack, and overcoat. And his offense was being dirty on parade! I nearly fell into the fort ditch with astonishment and wrath, for Mulvaney is the smartest man that ever mounted guard, and would as soon think of turning out uncleanly as of dispensing with his trousers.

"Who was the sergeant that checked him?" I asked.

"Mullins, o' course," said Ortheris. "There ain't no other man would whip 'im on the peg so. But Mullins ain't a man. 'E's a dirty little pig-scraper, that's wot 'e is."

"What did Mulvaney say? He's not the make of man to take that quietly."

"Said! Bin better for 'im if 'e'd shut 'is mouth. Lord, 'ow we laughed! 'Sargint,' 'e sez, 'ye say I'm dirty. Well,' sez 'e, 'when your wife lets you blow your own nose for yourself, perhaps you'll know wot dirt is. You're himperfectly eddicated, sargint,' sez 'e, an' then we fell in. But after p'rade, 'e was up an' Mullins was swearin' 'imself black in the face at ord'ly-room that Mulvaney 'ad called 'im a swine an' Lord knows wot all. You know Mullins. 'E'll 'ave 'is 'ead broke in one o' these days. 'E's too big a bloomin' liar for ord'nary consumption. 'Three hours' can an' kit,' sez the colonel; 'not for bein' dirty on p'rade, but for 'avin' said somethin' to Mullins, tho' I do not believe,' sez 'e, 'you said wot 'e said you said.' An' Mulvaney fell away sayin' nothin'. You know 'e never speaks to the colonel for fear o' gettin' 'imself fresh copped."

Mullins, a very young and very much married sergeant, whose manners were partly the result of innate depravity and partly of imperfectly digested board school, came over the bridge, and most rudely asked Ortheris what he was doing.

"Me?" said Ortheris. "'Ow! I'm waiting for my c'mission. Seed it comin' along yit?"

Mullins turned purple and passed on. There was the sound of a gentle chuckle from the glacis where Learoyd lay.

" 'E expects to get his c'mission some day," explained Ortheris; "Gawd 'elp the mess that 'ave to put their 'ands into the same kiddy as 'im! Wot time d'you make it, sir? Fower! Mulvaney'll be out in 'arf an hour. You don't want to buy a dorg, sir, do you? A pup you can trust—'arf Rampore by the colonel's grey'ound."

"Ortheris," I answered, sternly, for I knew what was in his mind, "do you mean to say that—"

"I didn't mean to arx money o' you, any'ow," said Ortheris; "I'd 'a' sold you the dorg good an' cheap, but—but—I know Mulvaney'll want somethin' after we've walked 'im orf, an' I ain't got nothin', nor 'e 'asn't neither. I'd sooner sell you the dorg, sir. 'Strewth I would!"

A shadow fell on the drawbridge, and Ortheris began to rise into the air, lifted by a huge hand upon his collar.

"Onything but t' braass," said Learoyd, quietly, as he held the Londoner over the ditch. "Onything but t' braass, Orth'ris, ma son! Ah've got one rupee eight annas of ma own." He showed two coins, and replaced Ortheris on the drawbridge rail.

"Very good," I said; "where are you going to?"

"Goin' to walk 'im orf wen 'e comes out—two miles or three or fower," said Ortheris.

The footsteps within ceased. I heard the dull thud of a knapsack falling on a bedstead, followed by the rattle of arms. Ten minutes later, Mulvaney, faultlessly attired, his lips compressed and his face as black as a thunderstorm, stalked into the sunshine on the drawbridge. Learoyd and Ortheris sprung from my side and closed in upon him, both leaning toward as horses lean upon the pole. In an instant they had disappeared down the sunken road to the cantonments, and I was left alone. Mulvaney had not seen fit to recognize me; wherefore, I felt that his trouble must be heavy upon him.

I climbed one of the bastions and watched the figures of the Three Musketeers grow smaller across the plain. They were walking as fast as they could put foot to the ground, and their heads were bowed. They fetched a great compass round the parade ground, skirted the cavalry lines, and vanished in the belt of trees that fringes the low land by the river.

I followed slowly, and sighted them—dusty, sweating, but still keeping up their long, swinging tramp—on the river-bank. They crashed through the forest reserve, headed toward the bridge of boats, and presently estab-

lished themselves on the bow of one of the pontoons. I rode cautiously till I saw three puffs of white smoke rise and die out in the clear evening air, and knew that peace had come again. At the bridge-head they waved me forward with gestures of welcome.

"Tie up your 'orse," shouted Ortheris, "an' come on, sir. We're all goin' 'ome in this 'ere bloomin' boat."

From the bridge-head to the forest officers' bungalow is but a step. The mess-man was there, and would see that a man held my horse. Did the sahib require aught else—a peg, or beer? Ritchie Sahib had left half a dozen bottles of the latter, but since the sahib was a friend of Ritchie Sahib, and he, the mess-man, was a poor man—

I gave my order quietly, and returned to the bridge. Mulvaney had taken off his boots, and was dabbling his toes in the water; Learoyd was lying on his back on the pontoon; and Ortheris was pretending to row with a big bamboo.

"I'm an ould fool," said Mulvaney, reflectively, "dhraggin' you two out here bekaze I was undher the black dog—sulkin' like a child. Me that was soldierin' when Mullins, an' be damned to him, was shqueakin' on a counterpin for foive shillin's a week, an' that not paid! Bhoys, I've took you foive miles out av natural pevarsity. Phew!"

"Wot's the odds as long as you're 'appy?" said Ortheris, applying himself afresh to the bamboo. "As well 'ere as anywhere else."

Learoyd held up a rupee and an eight anna bit, and shook his head sorrowfully. "Five mile from t' canteen, all along o' Mulvaney's blaasted pride."

"I know ut," said Mulvaney, penitently. "Why will ye come wid me? An' yet I wud be mortial sorry if ye did not—any time—though I am ould enough to know betther. But I will do pennance. I will take a dhrink av wather."

Ortheris squeaked shrilly. The butler of the forest bungalow was standing near the railings with a basket, uncertain how to clamber down to the pontoon.

"Might 'a' know'd you'd 'a' got liquor out o' bloomin'

Drawn by PETER NEWELL.

Mulvaney. Learoyd. Ortheris.

"*They were walking as fast as they could put foot to the ground, and their heads were bowed.*"

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desert, sir," said Ortheris, gracefully, to me. Then to the mess-man: "Easy with them there bottles. They're worth their weight in gold. Jock, ye long-armed beggar, get out o' that an' hike 'em down."

Learcyd had the basket on the pontoon in an instant, and the Three Musketeers gathered round it with dry lips. They drank my health in due and ancient form, and thereafter tobacco tasted sweeter than ever. They absorbed all the beer, and disposed themselves in picturesque attitudes to admire the setting sun—no man speaking for a while.

Mulvaney's head dropped upon his chest, and we thought that he was asleep.

"What on earth did you come so far for?" I whispered to Ortheris.

"To walk 'im orf, o' course. When 'e's been checked we allus walks 'im orf. 'E ain't fit to be spoke to those times—nor 'e ain't fit to leave alone neither. So we takes 'im till 'e is."

Mulvaney raised his head, and stared straight into the sunset. "I had my rifle," said he, dreamily, "an' I had my bay'nit, an' Mullins came round the corner, an' he looked in my face an' grinned dishpiteful. 'You can't blow your own nose,' sez he. Now, I cannot tell fwhat Mullins's expayrience may ha' been, but, Mother av God, he was nearer to his death that minut' than I have iver been to mine—and that's less than the thicknuss av a hair!"

"Yes," said Ortheris, calmly, "you'd look fine with all your buttons took orf, an' the band in front o' you, walkin' roun' slow time. We're both front-rank men, me an' Jock, when the rig'ment's in hollow square. Bloomin' fine you'd look. 'The Lord giveth an' the Lord taketh awai— (Heasy with that there drop!) Blessed be the naime o' the Lord!' " He gulped in a quaint and suggestive fashion.

"Mullins! Wot's Mullins?" said Learoyd, slowly. "Ah'd take a coomp'ny o' Mullinses—ma hand behind me. Sitha, Mulvaney, dunnat be a fool."

"You were not checked for fwhat you did not do, an'

made a mock av afther. 'Twas for less than that the Tyrone wud ha' sent O'Hara to hell, instid av lettin' him go by his own choosin', whin Rafferty shot him," retorted Mulvaney.

"And who stopped the Tyrone from doing it?" I asked.

"That ould fool who's sorry he didn't stick the pig Mullins." His head dropped again. When he raised it he shivered and put his hand on the shoulders of his two companions.

"Ye've walked the divil out av me, bhoys," said he.

Ortheris shot out the red-hot dottel of his pipe on the back of the hairy fist. "They say 'ell's 'otter than that," said he, as Mulvaney swore aloud. "You be warned so. Look yonder!"—he pointed across the river to a ruined temple—"Me an' you an' 'im"—he indicated me by a jerk of his head—"was there one day when Hi made a bloomin' show o' myself. You an' 'im stopped me doin' such—an' Hi was on'y wishful for to desert. You are makin' a bigger bloomin' show o' yourself now."

"Don't mind him, Mulvaney," I said; "Dinah Shadd won't let you hang yourself yet a while, and you don't intend to try it either. Let's hear about the Tyrone and O'Hara. Rafferty shot him for fooling with his wife. What happened before that?"

"There's no fool like an ould fool. You know you can do anythin' wid me whin I'm talkin'. Did I say I wud like to cut Mullins's liver out? I deny the imputashin, for fear that Orth'ris here wud report me—Ah! You wud tip me into the river, wud you? Sit quiet, little man. Anyways, Mullins is not worth the trouble av an extry p'rade, an' I will trate him wid outrajis contimpt. The Tyrone an' O'Hara! O'Hara an' the Tyrone, begad! Ould days are hard to bring back into the mouth, but they're always inside the head."

Followed a long pause.

"O'Hara was a divil. Though I saved him, for the honor av the rig'mint, from his death that time, I say it now. He was a divil—a long, bould, black-haired divil."

"Which way?" asked Ortheris.

"Women."

"Then I know another."

"Not more than in reason, if you mane me, ye warped walkin'-shtick. I have been young, an' for why should I not have tuk what I cud? Did I iver, whin I was corp'ril, use the rise av my rank—wan step an' that taken away, more's the sorrow an' the fault av me!—to prosecute a nefarious inthrigue, as O'Hara did? Did I, whin I was corp'ril, lay my spite upon a man an' make his life a dog's life from day to day? Did I lie, as O'Hara lied, till the young wans in the Tyrone turned white wid the fear av the judgment av God killin' thim all in a lump, as ut killed the woman at Devizes? I did not! I have sinned my sins an' I have made my confesshin, an' Father Victor knows the worst av me. O'Hara was tuk, before he cud spake, on Rafferty's doorstep, an' no man knows the worst av him. But this much I know!

"The Tyrone was recruited any fashion in the ould days. A draf' from Connemara—a draf' from Portsmouth—a draf' from Kerry, an' that was a blazin' bad draf'—here, there, and iverywhere—but the large av thim was Oirish—Black Oirish. Now there are Oirish an' Oirish. The good are good as the best, but the bad are wurrst than the wurrst. 'Tis this way. They clog together in pieces as fast as thieves, an' no wan knows fwhat they will do till wan turns informer an' the gang is bruk. But ut begins again a day later, meetin' in holes an' corners an' swearin' bloody oaths an' shtickin' a man in the back an' runnin' away, an' thin waitin' for the blood-money on the reward papers—to see if it's worth enough. Those are the Black Oirish, an' 'tis they that bring dishgrace upon the name av Oireland, an' thim I wud kill—as I nearly killed wan wanst.

"But to reshume. My room—'twas before I was married—was wid twelve av the scum av the earth—the pickin's av the gutter—mane men that wud neither laugh nor talk nor yet get dhrunk as a man shud. They thried some av

their dog's thricks on me, but I dhrew a line round my cot, an' the man that thransgressed ut wint into hospital for three days good.

"O'Hara had put his spite on the room—he was my color sargint—an' nothin' cud we do to plaze him. I was younger than I am now, an' I tuk what I got in the way av dressing down and punishmint-dhrill wid my tongue in my cheek. But it was diff'rint wid the others, an' why I cannot say, excipt that some men are borrun mane an' go to dhirty murdher where a fist is more than enough. Afther a whoile they changed their chune to me an' was desp'rit frien'ly—all twelve av thim cursin' O'Hara in chorus.

" 'Eyah,' sez I, 'O'Hara's a divil and I'm not for denyin' ut, but is he the only man in the wurruld? Let him go. He'll get tired av findin' our kit foul an' our 'couterments onproperly kep'.'

" 'We will not let him go,' sez they.

" 'Thin take him,' sez I, 'an' a dashed poor yield you will get for your throuble.'

" 'Is he not misconductin' himself wid Slimmy's wife?' sez another.

" 'She's common to the rig'mint,' sez I. 'Fwhat has made ye this partic'lar on a suddint?'

" 'Has he not put his spite on the roomful av us? Can we do anythin' that he will not check us for?' sez another.

" 'That's thrue,' sez I.

" 'Will ye not help us to do aught,' sez another—'a big bould man like you?'

" 'I will break his head upon his shoulthers av he puts hand on me,' sez I. 'I will give him the lie av he says that I'm dhirty, an' I wud not mind duckin' him in the artillery troughs if ut was not that I'm thryin' for my shtripes.'

" 'Is that all ye will do?' sez another. 'Have ye no more spunk than that, ye blood-dhrawn calf?'

" 'Blood-dhrawn I may be,' says I, gettin' back to my cot an' makin' my line round ut; 'but ye know that the man who comes acrost this mark will be more blood-dhrawn than

me. No man gives me the name in my mouth,' I sez. 'Ondersthand, I will have no part wid you in anythin' ye do, nor will I raise my fist to my shuperior. Is any wan comin' on?' sez I.

"They made no move, tho' I gave thim full time, but stud growlin' an' snarlin' together at wan ind av the room. I tuck up my cap and wint out to canteen, thinkin' no little av mesilf, an' there I grew most ondacintly dhrunk in my legs. My head was all reasonable.

" 'Houligan,' I sez to a man in E Comp'ny that was by way av bein' a frind av mine; 'I'm overtuk from the belt down. Do you give me the touch av your shoulther to presarve my formation an' march me acrost the ground into the high grass. I'll sleep ut off there,' sez I; an' Houligan—he's dead now, but good he was while he lasted—walked wid me, givin' me the touch whin I wint wide, ontil we came to the high grass, an', my faith, the sky an' the earth was fair rowlin' undher me. I made for where the grass was thickust, an' there I slep' off my liquor wid an aisy conscience. I did not desire to come on books too frequint; my characther havin' been shpotless for the good half av a year.

"Whin I roused, the dhrink was dyin' out in me, an' I felt as though a she-cat had littered in my mouth. I had not learned to hould my liquor wid comfort in thim days. 'Tis little betther I am now. 'I will get Houligan to pour a bucket over my head,' thinks I, an' wud ha' risen, but I heard some wan say: 'Mulvaney can take the blame av ut for the backslidin' hound he is.'

" 'Oho!' sez I, an' my head rang like a guard-room gong; 'fwhat is the blame that this young man must take to oblige Tim Vulmea?' For 'twas Tim Vulmea that shpoke. I turned on my belly an' crawled through the grass, a bit at a time, to where the spache came from. There was the twelve av my room sittin' down in a little patch, the dhry grass wavin' above their heads an' the sin av black murdher in their hearts. I put the stuff aside to get clear view.

" 'Fwhat's that?' sez wan man, jumpin' up.

"'A dog,' says Vulmea. 'You're a nice hand to this job! As I said, Mulvaney will take the blame—av ut comes to a pinch.'

"'Tis harrd to swear a man's life away,' sez a young wan.

"'Thank ye for that,' thinks I. 'Now, fwhat the divil are you paragins conthrivin' against me?'

"'Tis as easy as dhrinkin' your quart,' sez Vulmea. 'At seven or thereon, O'Hara will come acrost to the married quarters, goin' to call on Slimmy's wife, the swine! Wan av us'll pass the wurrd to the room an' we shtart the divil an' all av a shine—laughin' an' crackin' on an' t'rowin' our boots about. Thin O'Hara will come to give us the ordher to be quiet, the more by token bekaze the room-lamp will be knocked over in the larkin'. He will take the straight road to the ind door where there's the lamp in the veranda, an' that'll bring him clear against the light as he sthands. He will not be able to look into the dhark. Wan av us will loose off, an' a close shot ut will be, an' shame to the man that misses. 'Twill be Mulvaney's rifle, she that is at the head av the rack—there's no mistakin' that long shtocked, cross-eyed bitch even in the dhark.'

"The thief misnamed my ould firin'-piece out av jealousy—I was pershuaded av that—an' ut made me more angry than all.

"But Vulmea goes on: 'O'Hara will dhrop, an' by the time the light's lit again there'll be some six av us on the chest av Mulvaney, cryin' murdher an' rape. Mulvaney's cot is near the ind door, an' the schmokin' rifle will be lyin' undher him whin we've knocked him over. We know, an' all the rig'mint knows, that Mulvaney has given O'Hara more lip than any man av us. Will there be any doubt at the coort-martial? Wud twelve honust sodger-bhoys swear away the life av a dear, quiet, swate-timpered man such as is Mulvaney—wid his line av pipe-clay roun' his cot, threatenin' us wid murdher av we overshtepped ut, as we can truthful testify?'

"'Mary, Mother av Mercy!' thinks I to mysilf; 'it is this to have an unruly mimber an' fistes fit to use! Oh, the sneakin' hounds!'

"The big dhrops ran down my face, for I was wake wid the liquor an' had not the full av my wits about me. I laid shtill an' heard thim workin' themselves up to swear my life by tellin' tales av ivry time I had put my mark on wan or another; an' my faith, they was few that was not so dishtinguished. 'Twas all in the way av fair fight, though, for niver did I raise my hand excipt whin they had provoked me to ut.

"'' 'Tis all well,' sez wan av thim, 'but who's to do this shootin'?'

"'Fwhat matther?' sez Vulmea. ''Tis Mulvaney will do that—at the coort-martial.'

"'He will so,' sez the man, 'but whose hand is put to the trigger—in the room?'

"'Who'll do ut?' sez Vulmea, lookin' round, but divil a man answered. They began to dishpute till Kiss, that was always playin' Shpoil Five, sez: "Thry the kyards!" Wid that he opined his jackut an' tuk out the greasy palammers, an' they all fell in wid the notion.

"'Deal on!' sez Vulmea, wid a big rattlin' oath, 'an' the Black Curse av Shielygh come to the man that will not do his duty as the kyards say. Amin!'

"'Black Jack is the masther,' sez Kiss, dealin'. Black Jack, sorr, I shud expaytiate to you, is the ace of shpades, which from time immimorial has been intimately connected wid battle, murdher an' suddin death.

"Wanst Kiss dealt an' there was no sign, but the men was whoite wid the workin's av their sowls. Twice Kiss dealt, an' there was a gray shine on their cheeks like the mess av an egg. Three times Kiss dealt an' they was blue. 'Have ye not lost him?' sez Vulmea, wipin' the sweat on him. 'Let's ha' done quick!' 'Quick ut is,' sez Kiss, t'rowin' him the kyard; an' ut fell face up on his knee—Black Jack!

"Thin they all cackled wid laughin'. 'Duty thrippence,' sez wan av thim, 'an' damned cheap at that price!' But I cud see they all dhrew a little away from Vulmea an' lef' him sittin' playin' wid the kyard. Vulmea sez no word for a whoile but licked his lips—catways. Thin he threw up his head an' made the men swear by ivry oath known an' unknown to stand by him not alone in the room, but at the coort-martial that was to set on me! He tould off five av the biggest to stretch me on my cot whin the shot was fired, an' another man he tould off to put out the light, an' yet another to load my rifle. He wud not do that himself; an' that was quare, for 'twas but a little thing.

"Thin they swore over again that they wud not bethray wan another, an' crep' out av the grass in diff'rint ways, two by two. A mercy ut was that they did not come on me. I was sick wid fear in the pit av my stummick—sick, sick, sick! Afther they was all gone, I wint back to the canteen an' called for a quart to put a thought in me. Vulmea was there, dhrinkin' heavy, an' politeful to me beyond reason. 'Fwhat will I do—fwhat will I do!' thinks I to mesilf whin Vulmea wint away.

"Prisintly the arm'rer sargint comes in stiffiin' an' crackin' on, not pleased wid any wan, bekaze the Martini-Henri bein' new to the rig'mint in those days we used to play the mischief wid her arrangemints. 'Twas a long time before I cud get out av the way av thryin' to pull back the back-sight an' turnin' her over afther firin'—as if she was a Snider.

" 'Fwhat tailor-men do they give me to work wid?' sez the arm'rer sargint. 'Here's Hogan, his nose flat as a table, laid by for a week, an' ivry comp'ny sendin' their arrums in knocked to small shivreens.'

" 'Fwhat's wrong wid Hogan, sargint?' sez I.

" 'Wrong!' sez the arm'rer sargint; 'I showed him, as though I had been his mother, the way av shtrippin' a 'Tini, an' he shtrup her clane an' aisy. I towld him to put her to again an' fire a blank into the blow-pit to show how the dirt hung on the groovin'. He did that, but he did not put in

the pin av the fallin'-block, an' av coorse whin he fired he was strook by the block jumpin' clear. Well for him 'twas but a blank—a full charge wud ha' cut his oi out.'

"I looked a trifle wiser than a boiled sheep's head. 'How's that, sargint?' sez I.

"'This way, ye blundherin' man, an' don't you be doin' ut,' sez he. Wid that he shows me a Waster action—the breech av her all cut away to show the inside—an' so plazed was he to grumble that he dimonstrated fwhat Hogan had done twich over. An' that comes av not knowin' the wepping you're purvided wid,' sez he.

" 'Thank ye, sargint,' sez I; 'I will come to you again for further information.'

" 'Ye will not,' sez he. 'Kape your clanin'-rod away from the breech-pin or you will get into throuble.'

"I wint outside an' I could ha' danced wid delight for the grandeur av ut. 'They will load my rifle, good luck to thim, whoile I'm away,' thinks I, and back I wint to the canteen to give them their clear chanst.

"The canteen was fillin' wid men at the ind av the day. I made feign to be far gone in dhrink, an', wan by wan, all my roomful came in wid Vulmea. I wint away, walkin' thick and heavy, but not so thick an' heavy that any wan cud ha' tuk me. Sure and thrue, there was a kyartridge gone from my pouch an' lyin' snug in my rifle. I was hot wid rage against thim all, and I worried the bullet out wid my teeth as fast as I cud, the room bein' empty. Then I tuk my boot an' the clanin'-rod and knocked out the pin av the fallin'-block. Oh, 'twas music when that pin rowled on the flure! I put ut into my pouch an' stuck a dab av dirt on the holes in the plate, puttin' the fallin'-block back. 'That'll do your business, Vulmea,' sez I, lyin' easy on the cot. 'Come an' sit on my chest the whole room av you, an' I will take you to my bosom for the biggest divils that iver cheated halter.' I wud have no mercy on Vulmea. His oi or his life—little I cared!

"At dusk they came back, the twelve av thim, an' they

had all been dhrinkin'. I was shammin' sleep on the cot. Wan man wint outside on the veranda. Whin he whishtled they began to rage roun' the room an' carry on tremenjus. But I niver want to hear men laugh as they did—skylarkin' too! 'Twas like mad jackals.

"'Shtop that blasted noise!' sez O'Hara in the dark, an' pop goes the room lamp. I cud hear O'Hara runnin' up an' the rattlin' av my rifle in the rack an' the men breathin' heavy as they stud roun' my cot. I cud see O'Hara in the light av the veranda lamp, an' thin I heard the crack av my rifle. She cried loud, poor darlint, bein' mishandled. Next minut five men were houldin' me down. 'Go easy,' I sez; 'fwhat's ut all about?'

"Thin Vulmea, on the flure, raised a howl you cud hear from wan ind av contonmints to the other. 'I'm dead, I'm butchered, I'm blind!' sez he. 'Saints have mercy on my sinful sowl! Sind for Father Constant! Oh, sind for Father Constant an' let me go clean!' By that I knew he was not so dead as I cud ha' wished.

"O'Hara picks up the lamp in the veranda wid a hand as stiddy as a rest. 'Fwhat damned dog's thrick is this av yours?' sez he, and turns the light on Tim Vulmea that was shwimmin' in blood from top to toe. The fallin'-block had sprung free behin' a full charge av powther—good care I tuk to bite down the brass afther takin' out the bullet that there might be somethin' to give ut full worth—an' had cut Tim from the lip to the corner av the right eye, lavin' the eyelid in tatthers, an' so up an' along by the forehead to the hair. 'Twas more av a rakin' plow, if you will ondherstand, than a clean cut; an' niver did I see a man bleed as Vulmea did. The dhrink an' the stew that he was in pumped the blood strong. The minut the men sittin' on my chest heard O'Hara spakin' they scatthered each wan to his cot, an' cried out very politeful: 'Fwhat is ut, sargint?'

"'Fwhat is ut!' sez O'Hara, shakin' Tim. 'Well an' good do you know fwhat ut is, ye skulkin' ditch-lurkin' dogs! Get a doolie, an' take this whimperin' scut away.

There will be more heard av ut than any av you will care for.'

"Vulmea sat up rockin' his head in his hand an' moanin' for Father Constant.

" 'Be done!' sez O'Hara, dhraggin' him up by the hair. 'You're none so dead that you cannot go fifteen years for thryin' to shoot me.'

" 'I did not,' sez Vulmea; 'I was shootin' mesilf.'

" 'That's quare,' sez O'Hara, 'for the front av my jackut is black wid your powther.' He tuk up the rifle that was still warm an' began to laugh. 'I'll make your life hell to you,' sez he, 'for attempted murdher an' kapin' your rifle onproperly. You'll be hanged first an' thin put undher stoppages for four fifteen. The rifle's done for,' sez he.

" 'Why, 'tis my rifle!' sez I, comin' up to look; 'Vulmea, ye divil, fwhat were you doin' wid her—answer me that?'

" 'Lave me alone,' sez Vulmea; 'I'm dyin'!'

" 'I'll wait till you're betther,' sez I, 'an' thin we two will talk ut out umbrageous.'

"O'Hara pitched Tim into the doolie, none too tinder, but all the bhoys kep' by their cots, which was not the sign av innocint men. I was huntin' ivrywhere for my fallin'-block, but not findin' ut at all. I niver found ut.

" 'Now fwhat will I do?' sez O'Hara, swinging the veranda light in his hand an' lookin' down the room. I had hate and contimpt av O'Hara an' I have now, dead tho' he is, but, for all that, will I say he was a brave man. He is baskin' in purgathory this tide, but I wish he cud hear that, whin he stud lookin' down the room an' the bhoys shivered before the oi av him, I knew him for a brave man an' I liked him so.

" 'Fwhat will I do?' sez O'Hara ag'in, an' we heard the voice av a woman low an' sof' in the veranda. 'Twas Slimmy's wife, come over at the shot, sittin' on wan av the benches an' scarce able to walk.

" 'Oh Denny—Denny dear,' sez she, 'have they kilt you?'

"O'Hara looked down the room again an' showed his teeth to the gum. Then he spat on the flure.

" 'You're not worth ut,' sez he. 'Light that lamp, ye dogs,' an' wid that he turned away, an' I saw him walkin' off wid Slimmy's wife; she thryin' to wipe off the powther-black on the front av his jackut wid her handkerchief. 'A brave man you are,' thinks I—'a brave man an' a bad woman.'

"No wan said a word for a time. They was all ashamed, past spache.

" 'Fwhat d'you think he will do?' sez wan av thim at last. 'He knows we're all in ut.'

" 'Are we so?' sez I from my cot. 'The man that sez that to me will be hurt. I do not know,' sez I, 'fwhat onderhand divilmint you have conthrived, but by what I've seen I know that you cannot commit murdher wid another man's rifle—such shakin' cowards you are. I'm goin' to slape,' I sez, 'an' you can blow my head off whoile I lay.' I did not slape, though, for a long time. Can ye wonder?

"Next morn the news was through all the rig'mint, an' there was nothin' that the men did not tell. O'Hara reports, fair an' easy, that Vulmea was come to grief through tamperin' wid his rifle in barricks, all for to show the mechanism. An', by my sowl, he had the impart'nince to say that he was on the shpot at the time an' cud certify that ut was an accident! You might ha' knocked my roomful down wid a straw whin they heard that. 'Twas lucky for thim that the bhoys were always thryin' to find out how the new rifle was made, an' a lot av thim had come up for easin' the pull by shtickin' bits av grass an' such in the part av the lock that showed near the thrigger. The first issues of the 'Tinis was not covered in, an' I mesilf have eased the pull av mine time an' ag'in. A light pull is ten points on the range to me.

" 'I will not have this foolishness!' sez the colonel. 'I will twist the tail off Vulmea!' sez he; but whin he saw him, all tied up an' groanin' in hospital, he changed his mind. 'Make him an early convalescint,' sez he to the doctor, an' Vulmea was made so for a warnin'. His big bloody band-

ages an' face puckered up to wan side did more to kape the bhoys from messin' wid the insides av their rifles than any punishment.

"O'Hara gave no reason for fwhat he'd said, an' all my roomful were too glad to inquire tho' he put his spite upon thim more wearin' than before. Wan day, howiver, he tuk me apart very polite, for he cud be that at the choosin'.

" 'You're a good sodger, tho' you're a damned insolint man,' sez he.

" 'Fair words, sargint,' sez I, 'or I may be insolent ag'in.'

" ' 'Tis not like you,' sez he, 'to lave your rifle in the rack widout the breech-pin, for widout the breech-pin she was whin Vulmea fired. I should ha' found the break av ut in the eyes av the holes, else,' he sez.

" 'Sargint,' sez I, 'fwhat wud your life ha' been worth av the breech-pin had been in place, for, on my sowl, my life wud be worth just as much to me av I towld you whether ut was or was not. Be thankful the bullet was not there,' sez I.

" 'That's thrue,' sez he, pulling his mustache; 'but I do not believe that you, for all your lip, was in that business.'

" 'Sargint,' sez I, 'I cud hammer the life out av a man in ten minuts wid my fistes if that man dishpleased me; for I am a good sodger, an' I will be threated as such, an' whoile my fistes are my own they're strong enough for all work I have to do. They do not fly back toward me!' sez I, lookin' him betune the eyes.

"You're a good man,' sez he, lookin' me betune the eyes —an' oh, he was a gran' built man to see—'you're a good man,' he sez, 'an' I cud wish, for the pure frolic av ut, that I was not a sargint, or that you were not a privit; an' you will think me no coward whin I say this thing.'

"I do not,' sez I. 'I saw you whin Vulmea mishandled the rifle. But, sargint,' I sez, 'take the wurrd from me now, spakin' as man to man wid the shtripes off, tho, 'tis little right I have to talk, me being fwhat I am by natur'. This time ye tuk no harm, an' next time ye may not, but, in the ind, so sure as Slimmy's wife came into the veranda, so sure

will ye take harm—an' bad harm. Have thought, sargint,' sez I. 'Is ut worth ut?'

"'Ye're a bowld man,' sez he, breathin' harrd. 'A very bowld man. But I am a bowld man tu. Do you go your way, Privit Mulvaney, an' I will go mine.'

"We had no further spache thin or afther, but, wan by another, he drafted the twelve av my room out into other rooms an' got thim spread among the comp'nies, for they was not a good breed to live together, an' the comp'ny orf'cers saw ut. They wud ha' shot me in the night av they had known fwhat I knew; but that they did not.

"An', in the ind, as I said, O'Hara met his death from Rafferty for foolin' wid his wife. He wint his own way too well—Eyah, too well! Shtraight to that affair, widout turnin' to the right or to the lef', he wint, an' may the Lord have mercy on his sowl. Amin!"

"'Ear! 'Ear!" said Ortheris, pointing the moral with a wave of his pipe. "An' this is 'im 'oo would be a bloomin' Vulmea all for the sake of Mullins an' a bloomin' button! Mullins never went after a woman in his life. Mrs. Mullins, she saw 'im one day—"

"Ortheris," I said, hastily, for the romances of Private Ortheris are slightly too daring for publication, "look at the sun. It's a quarter past six!"

"Oh, Lord! Three-quarters of an hour for five an' a 'arf miles! We'll 'ave to run like Jimmy O."

The Three Musketeers clambered on to the bridge, and departed hastily in the direction of the cantonment road. When I overtook them I offered them two stirrups and a tail, which they accepted enthusiastically. Ortheris held the tail, and in this manner we trotted steadily through the shadows by an unfrequented road.

At the turn into the cantonments we heard carriage wheels. It was the colonel's barouche, and in it sat the colonel's wife and daughter. I caught a suppressed chuckle, and my beast sprung forward with a lighter step.

The Three Musketeers had vanished into the night.

L'ENVOI

And they were stronger hands than mine
That digged the Ruby from the earth—
More cunning brains that made it worth
The large desire of a King;
And bolder hearts that through the brine
Went down the Perfect Pearl to bring.

Lo, I have wrought in common clay
Rude figures of a rough-hewn race,
For Pearls strew not the market-place
In this my town of banishment,
Where with the shifting dust I play
And eat the bread of Discontent.

Yet is there life in that I make—
Oh, Thou who knowest, turn and see,
As Thou hast power over me,
So have I power over these,
Because I wrought them for Thy sake,
And breathed in them mine agonies.

Small mirth was in the making. Now
I lift the cloth that cloaks the clay,
And, wearied, at Thy feet I lay
My wares ere I go forth to sell.
The long baazar will praise—but Thou—
Heart of my Heart, have I done well?

ONLY A SUBALTERN

. . . . Not only to enforce by command but to encourage by example the energetic discharge of duty and the steady endurance of the difficulties and privations inseparable from Military Service.
—*Bengal Army Regulations*

THEY made Bobby Wick pass an examination at Sandhurst. He was a gentleman before he was gazetted, so, when the empress announced that "Gentleman Cadet Robert Hanna Wick" was posted as second lieutenant to the Tyneside Tail Twisters at Krab Bokhar, he became an officer and a gentleman, which is an enviable thing; and there was joy in the house of Wick where Mamma Wick and all the little Wicks fell upon their knees and offered incense to Bobby by virtue of his achievements.

Papa Wick had been a commissioner in his day, holding authority over three millions of men in the Chota-Buldana Division, building great works for the good of the land, and doing his best to make two blades of grass grow where there was but one before. Of course nobody knew anything about this in the little English village where he was just "old Mr. Wick" and had forgotten that he was a Companion of the Order of the Star of India.

He patted Bobby on the shoulder and said: "Well done, my boy!"

There followed, while the uniform was being prepared, an interval of pure delight, during which Bobby took brevet-rank as a "man" at the women-swamped tennis-parties and tea-fights of the village, and, I dare say, had his joining-time been extended, would have fallen in love with several girls at once. Little country villages at home are very full of nice

girls, because all the young men come out here to make their fortunes.

"India," said Papa Wick, "is the place. I've had thirty years of it, and, begad, I'd like to go back again. When you join the Tail Twisters you'll be among friends, if every one hasn't forgotten Wick of Chota-Buldana, and a lot of people will be kind to you for our sakes. The men will tell you more about outfit than I can; but remember this. Stick to your regiment, Bobby—stick to your regiment. You'll see men all round you going into the staff corps, and doing every possible sort of duty but regimental, and you may be tempted to follow suit. Now so long as you keep within your allowance—and I haven't stinted you there—stick to the line—the whole line and nothing but the line. Be careful how you back another young fool's bill, and if you fall in love with a woman twenty years older than yourself, don't tell me about it, that's all."

With these counsels, and many others equally valuable, did Papa Wick fortify Bobby ere that last awful night at Portsmouth when the officers' quarters held more inmates than were provided for by the regulations, and the liberty-men of the ships fell foul of the drafts for India, and the battle raged long and loud from the dockyard gates even to the slums of Longport, while the drabs of Fratton came down and scratched the faces of the queen's officers.

Bobby Wick, with an ugly bruise on his freckled nose, a sick and shaky detachment to maneuver in-ship and the comfort of fifty scornful females to attend to, had no time to feel homesick till the "Malabar" reached midchannel, when he combined his emotions with a little guard-visiting and a great deal of nausea.

The Tail Twisters were a most particular regiment. Those who knew them least said that they were eaten up with "side." But their reserve and their internal arrangements generally were merely protective diplomacy. Some five years before, the colonel commanding had looked into the fourteen fearless eyes of seven plump and juicy sub-

alterns who had all applied to enter the staff corps, and had asked them why the three stars should he, a colonel of the line, command a dashed nursery for double-dashed bottle-suckers who put on condemned tin spurs and rode qualified mokes at the hiatused heads of forsaken black regiments. He was a rude man and a terrible. Wherefore the remnant took measures (with the half-butt as an engine of public opinion) till the rumor went abroad that young men who used the Tail Twisters as a crutch to the staff corps had many and varied trials to endure. However, a regiment had just as much right to its own secrets as a woman.

When Bobby came up from Deolali and took his place among the Tail Twisters, it was gently but firmly borne in upon him that the regiment was his father and his mother and his indissolubly wedded wife, and that there was no crime under the canopy of heaven blacker than that of bringing shame on the regiment, which was the best-shooting, best-drilled, best set-up, bravest, most illustrious, and in all respects most desirable regiment within the compass of the seven seas. He was taught the legends of the mess plate, from the great grinning golden gods that had come out of the Summer Palace in Pekin to the silver-mounted markhor-horn snuff-mull presented by the last C. O. (he who spake to the seven subalterns). And every one of those legends told him of battles fought at long odds, without fear as without support; of hospitality catholic as an Arab's; of friendships deep as the sea and steady as the fighting-line; of honor won by hard roads for honor's sake; and of instant and unquestioning devotion to the regiment—the regiment that claims the lives of all and lives forever.

More than once, too, he came officially into contact with the regimental colors, which looked like the lining of a bricklayer's hat on the end of a chewed stick. Bobby did not kneel and worship them, because British subalterns are not constructed in that manner. Indeed, he condemned them for their weight at the very moment that they were filling with awe and other more noble sentiments.

But best of all was the occasion when he moved with the Tail Twisters in review order at the breaking of a November day. Allowing for duty-men and sick, the regiment was one thousand and eighty strong, and Bobby belonged to them; for was he not a subaltern of the line—the whole line, and nothing but the line—as the tramp of two thousand one hundred and sixty sturdy ammunition boots attested? He would not have changed places with Deighton of the horse battery, whirling by in a pillar of cloud to a chorus of "Strong right! Strong left!" or Hogan-Yale of the White Hussars, leading his squadron for all it was worth, with the price of horseshoes thrown in; or "Tick" Boileau, trying to live up to his fierce blue and gold turban while the wasps of the Bengal Cavalry stretched to a gallop in the wake of the long, lolloping Walers of the White Hussars.

They fought through the clear cool day, and Bobby felt a little thrill run down his spine when he heard the tinkle-tinkle-tinkle of the empty cartridge-cases hopping from the breech-blocks after the roar of the volleys; for he knew that he should live to hear that sound in action. The review ended in a glorious chase across the plain—batteries thundering after cavalry to the huge disgust of the White Hussars, and the Tyneside Tail Twisters hunting a Sikh regiment, till the lean lathy Singhs panted with exhaustion. Bobby was dusty and dripping long before noon, but his enthusiasm was merely focused—not diminished.

He returned to sit at the feet of Revere, his "skipper"—that is to say, the captain of his company, and to be instructed in the dark art and mystery of managing men, which is a very large part of the profession of arms.

"If you haven't a taste that way," said Revere between his puffs of his cheroot, "you'll never be able to get the hang of it, but remember, Bobby, 'tisn't the best drill, though drill is nearly everything, that hauls a regiment through hell and out on the other side. It's the man who knows how to handle men—goat-men, swine-men, dog-men, and so on."

"Dormer, for instance," said Bobby; "I think he comes under the head of fool-men. He mopes like a sick owl."

"That's where you make your mistake, my son. Dormer isn't a fool yet, but he's a dashed dirty soldier, and his room corporal makes fun of his socks before kit-inspection. Dormer, being two-thirds pure brute, goes into a corner and growls."

"How do you know?" said Bobby, admiringly.

"Because a company commander has to know these things —because if he does not know, he may have crime—ay, murder—brewing under his very nose and yet not see that it's there. Dormer is being badgered out of his mind—big as he is—and he hasn't intellect enough to resent it. He's taken to quiet boozing. Bobby, when the butt of a room goes on the drink, or takes to moping by himself, measures are necessary to yank him out of himself."

"What measures? Man can't run round coddling his men forever."

"No. The men would precious soon show him that he was not wanted. You've got to—"

Here the color-sergeant entered with some papers; Bobby reflected for a while as Revere looked through the company forms.

"Does Dormer do anything, sergeant?" Bobby asked with the air of one continuing an interrupted conversation.

"No, sir. Does 'is dooty like a hortomato," said the sergeant, who delighted in long words. "A dirty soldier, and 'e's under full stoppages for new kit. It's covered with scales, sir."

"Scales? What scales?"

"Fish scales, sir. 'E's always pokin' in the mud by the river an' a-cleanin' them muchly fish with 'is thumbs." Revere was still absorbed in the company papers, and the sergeant, who was grimly fond of Bobby, continued: " 'E generally goes down there when 'e's got 'is skinful, beggin' your pardon, sir, an' they do say that the more lush—in-he-briated 'e is, the more fish 'e catches. They call him the Looney Fishmonger in the comp'ny, sir."

Revere signed the last paper and the sergeant retreated.

"It's a filthy amusement," sighed Bobby to himself. Then aloud to Revere: "Are you really worried about Dormer?"

"A little. You see he's never mad enough to send to hospital, or drunk enough to run in; but at any minute he may flare up, brooding and sulking as he does. He resents any interest being shown in him, and the only time I took him out shooting he all but shot me by accident."

"I fish," said Bobby, with a wry face. "I hire a country boat and go down the river from Thursday to Sunday, and the amiable Dormer goes with me—if you can spare us both."

"You blazing young fool!" said Revere, but his heart was full of much more pleasant words.

Bobby, the captain of a dhoni, with Private Dormer for mate, dropped down the river on Thursday morning—the private at the bow, the subaltern at the helm. The private glared uneasily at the subaltern, who respected the reserve of the private.

After six hours, Dormer paced to the stern, saluted, and said: "Beg y' pardon, sir, but was you ever on the Durh'm Canal?"

"No," said Bobby Wick. "Come and have some tiffin."

They eat in silence. As the evening fell, Private Dormer broke forth, speaking to himself:

"Hi was on the Durh'm Canal, jes' such a night, come next week twelvemonth, a-trailin' of my toes in the water." He smoked and said no more till bedtime.

The witchery of the dawn turned the gray river-reaches to purple, gold, and opal; and it was as though the lumbering dhoni crept across the splendors of a new heaven.

Private Dormer popped his head out of his blanket and gazed at the glory below and around.

"Well, damn my eyes!" said Private Dormer in an awed whisper. "This 'ere is like a bloomin' gallantry-show!"

For the rest of the day he was dumb, but achieved an ensanguined filthiness through the cleaning of big fish.

The boat returned on Saturday evening. Dormer had been struggling with speech since noon. As the lines and luggage were being disembarked, he found tongue.

"Beg y' pardon, sir," he said, "but would you—would you min' shakin' 'ands with me, sir?"

"Of course not," said Bobby, and he shook accordingly. Dormer returned to barracks and Bobby to mess.

"He wanted a little quiet and some fishing, I think," said Bobby. "My aunt, but he's a filthy sort of animal! Have you ever seen him clean 'them muchly fish with 'is thumbs'?"

"Anyhow," said Revere three weeks later, "he's doing his best to keep his things clean."

When the spring died, Bobby joined in the general scramble for Hill leave, and to his surprise and delight secured three months.

"As good a boy as I want," said Revere, the admiring skipper.

"The best of the batch," said the adjutant to the colonel. "Keep back that young skrimshanker Porkiss, sir, and let Revere make him sit up."

So Bobby departed joyously to Simla Pahar with a tin box of gorgeous raiment.

"Son of Wick—old Wick, of Chota-Buldana? Ask him to dinner, dear," said the aged men.

"What a nice boy!" said the matrons and the maids.

"First-class place, Simla. Oh, ri—ipping!" said Bobby Wick, and ordered new cord breeches on the strength of it.

"We're in a bad way," wrote Revere to Bobby at the end of two months. "Since you left, the regiment has taken to fever and is fairly rotten with it—two hundred in hospital, about a hundred in cells—drinking to keep off fever—and the companies on parade fifteen file strong at the outside. There's rather more sickness in the out-villages than I care for, but then I'm so blistered with prickly-heat that I'm ready to hang myself. What's the yarn about your mash-

ing a Miss Haverley up there? Not serious, I hope? You're over-young to hang millstones round your neck, and the colonel will turf you out of that in double-quick time if you attempt it."

It was not the colonel that brought Bobby out of Simla, but a much more to be respected commandant. The sickness in the out-villages spread, the bazaar was put out of bounds, and then came the news that the Tail Twisters must go into camp. The message flashed to the Hill stations: "Cholera—Leave stopped—Officers recalled." Alas, for the white gloves in the neatly soldered boxes, the rides and the dances and picnics that were to be, the love half spoken, and the debt unpaid! Without demur and without question, fast as tongue could fly or pony gallop, back to their regiments and their batteries, as though they were hastening to their weddings, fled the subalterns.

Bobby received his mandate on returning from a dance at Viceregal Lodge, where he had— But only the Haverley girl knows what Bobby had said or how many waltzes he had claimed for the next ball. Six in the morning saw Bobby at the Tonga Office in the drenching rain, the whirl of the last waltz still in his ears, and an intoxication due neither to wine nor waltzing in his brain.

"Good man!" shouted Deighton of the horse battery through the mists. "Whar you raise dat tonga? I'm coming with you. Ow! But I've a head and half. I didn't sit out all night. They say the battery's awful bad," and he hummed dolorously:

> "Leave the what at the what's-its-name,
> Leave the flock without shelter,
> Leave the corpse uninterred,
> Leave the bride at the altar!

"My faith! It'll be more bally corpse than bride, though, this journey. Jump in, Bobby. *Chalo Coachwan!*"

On the Umballa platform waited a detachment of officers discussing the latest news from the stricken cantonment, and

it was here that Bobby learned the real condition of the Tail Twisters.

"They went into camp," said an elderly major recalled from the whist-tables at Mussoorie to a sickly native regiment, "they went into camp with two hundred and ten sick in carts. Two hundred and ten fever cases only, and the balance looking like so many ghosts with sore eyes. A Madras regiment could have walked through 'em!"

"But they were as fit as bedamned when I left them!" said Bobby.

"Then you'd better make them as fit as bedamned when you rejoin," said the major, brutally.

Bobby pressed his forehead against the rain-splashed window-pane as the train lumbered across the sodden Doab, and prayed for the health of the Tyneside Tail Twisters. Naini Tal had sent down her contingent with all speed; the lathering ponies of the Dalhousie Road staggered into Pathankot, taxed to the full stretch of their strength; while from cloudy Darjiling the Calcutta mail whirled up the last straggler of the little army that was to fight a fight, in which was neither medal nor honor for the winning, against an enemy none other than "the sickness that destroyeth in the noonday."

And as each man reported himself, he said: "This is a bad business," and went about his own forthwith, for every regiment and battery in the cantonment was under canvas, the sickness bearing them company.

Bobby fought his way through the rain to the Tail Twisters' temporary mess, and Revere could have fallen on the boy's neck for the joy of seeing that ugly, wholesome phiz once more.

"Keep 'em amused and interested," said Revere. "They went on the drink, poor fools, after the first two cases, and there was no improvement. Oh, it's good to have you back, Bobby! Porkiss is a—never mind."

Deighton came over from the artillery camp to attend a dreary mess dinner, and contributed to the general gloom by nearly weeping over the condition of his beloved battery.

Porkiss so far forgot himself as to insinuate that the presence of the officers could do no earthly good, and that the best thing would be to send the entire regiment into hospital and "let the doctors look after them." Porkiss was demoralized with fear, nor was his peace of mind restored when Revere said, coldly:

"Oh! The sooner you go out the better, if that's your way of thinking. Any public school could send us fifty good men in your place, but it takes time, time, Porkiss, and money, and a certain amount of trouble, to make a regiment. S'pose you're the person we go into camp for, eh?"

Whereupon Porkiss was overtaken with a great and chilly fear which a drenching in the rain did not allay, and, two days later, quitted this world for another, where, men do fondly hope, allowances are made for the weakness of the flesh. The regimental sergeant-major looked wearily across the sergeants' mess tent when the news was announced.

"There goes the worst of them," he said. "It'll take the best, and then, please God, it'll stop." The sergeants were silent till one said: "It couldn't be him!" and all knew of whom Travis was thinking.

Bobby Wick stormed through the tents of his company, rallying, rebuking, mildly, as is consistent with the regulations, chaffing the faint-hearted; hauling the sound into the watery sunlight when there was a break in the weather, and bidding them be of good cheer for their trouble was nearly at an end; scuttling on his dun pony round the outskirts of the camp and heading back men who, with the innate perversity of British soldiers, were always wandering into infected villages, or drinking deeply from rain-flooded marshes; comforting the panic-stricken with rude speech, and more than once tending the dying who had no friends—the men without "townies"; organizing, with banjos and burned cork, sing-songs which should allow the talent of the regiment full play; and generally, as he explained, "playing the giddy garden goat all round."

"You're worth half a dozen of us, Bobby," said his skipper in a moment of enthusiasm. "How the devil do you keep it up?"

Bobby made no answer, but had Revere looked into the breast-pocket of his coat he might have seen there a sheaf of badly written letters which perhaps accounted for the power that possessed the boy. A letter came to Bobby every other day. The spelling was not above reproach, but the sentiments must have been most satisfactory, for on receipt Bobby's eyes softened marvelously, and he was wont to fall into a tender abstraction for a while ere, shaking his cropped head, he charged into his work anew.

By what power he drew after him the hearts of the roughest, and the Tail Twisters counted in their ranks some rough diamonds indeed, was a mystery to both skipper and C. O., who learned from the regimental chaplain that Bobby was considerably more in request in the hospital tents than the Reverend John Emery.

"The men seem fond of you. Are you in the hospitals much?" said the colonel, who did his daily round and ordered the men to get well with a grimness that did not cover his bitter grief.

"A little, sir," said Bobby.

"Shouldn't go there too often if I were you. They say it's not contagious, but there's no use in running unnecessary risks. We can't afford to have you down, y'know."

Six days later, it was with the utmost difficulty that the post-runner plashed his way out to the camp with the mail-bags, for the rain was falling in torrents. Bobby received a letter, bore it off to his tent, and, the programme for the next week's sing-song being satisfactorily disposed of, sat down to answer it. For an hour the unhandy pen toiled over the paper, and where sentiment rose to more than normal tide-level, Bobby Wick stuck out his tongue and breathed heavily. He was not used to letter-writing.

"Beg y' pardon, sir," said a voice at the tent door; "but Dormer's 'orrid bad, sir, an' they've taken him orf, sir."

"Damn Private Dormer and you too!" said Bobby Wick, running the blotter over the half-finished letter. "Tell him I'll come in the morning."

" 'E's awful bad, sir," said the voice, hesitatingly. There was an undecided squelching of heavy boots.

"Well?" said Bobby, impatiently.

"Excusin' 'imself before'and for takin' the liberty, 'e says it would be a comfort for to assist 'im, sir, if—"

"*Tattoo lao!* Here, come in out of the rain till I'm ready. What blasted nuisances you are! That's brandy. Drink some. You want it. Hang on to my stirrup and tell me if I go too fast."

Strengthened by a four-finger "nip," which he absorbed without a wink, the hospital orderly kept up with the slipping, mud-stained, and very disgusted pony as it shambled to the hospital tent.

Private Dormer was certainly " 'orrid bad." He had all but reached the stage of collapse and was not pleasant to look upon.

"What's this, Dormer?" said Bobby, bending over the man. "You're not going out this time. You've got to come fishing with me once or twice more yet."

The blue lips parted and in the ghost of a whisper said: "Beg y' pardon, sir, disturbin' of you now, but would you min' 'oldin' my 'and, sir?"

Bobby sat on the side of the bed, and the icy cold hand closed on his own like a vise, forcing a lady's ring which was on the little finger deep into the flesh. Bobby set his lips and waited, the water dripping from the hem of his trousers. An hour passed and the grasp of the hand did not relax, nor did the expression of the drawn face change. Bobby with infinite craft lighted himself a cheroot with the left hand, his right arm was numbed to the elbow, and resigned himself to a night of pain.

Dawn showed a very white-faced subaltern sitting on the side of a sick man's cot, and a doctor in the doorway using language unfit for publication.

"Have you been here all night, you young ass?" said the doctor.

"There or thereabout," said Bobby, ruefully. "He's frozen on to me."

Dormer's mouth shut with a click. He turned his head and sighed. The clinging hand opened, and Bobby's arm fell useless at his side.

"He'll do," said the doctor, quietly. "It must have been a toss-up all through the night. Think you're to be congratulated on this case."

"Oh, bosh!" said Bobby. "I thought the man had gone out long ago—only—only I didn't care to take my hand away. Rub my arm down, there's a good chap. What a grip the brute has! I'm chilled to the marrow!" He passed out of the tent shivering.

Private Dormer was allowed to celebrate his repulse of death by strong waters. Four days later, he sat on the side of his cot and said to the patients, mildly: "I'd a' liken to 'a' spoken to 'im—so I should."

But at that time Bobby was reading yet another letter—he had the most persistent correspondent of any man in camp—and was even then about to write that the sickness had abated, and in another week at the outside would be gone. He did not intend to say that the chill of a sick man's hand seemed to have struck into the heart whose capacities for affection he dwelt on at such length. He did intend to inclose the illustrated programme of the forthcoming sing-song whereof he was not a little proud. He also intended to write on many other matters which do not concern us, and doubtless would have done so but for the slight feverish headache which made him dull and unresponsive at mess.

"You are overdoing it, Bobby," said his skipper; " 'might give the rest of us credit of doing a little work. You go on as if you were the whole mess rolled into one. Take it easy."

"I will," said Bobby. "I'm feeling done up, somehow." Revere looked at him anxiously and said nothing. There

was a flickering of lanterns about the camp that night, and a rumor that brought men out of their cots to the tent doors, a paddling of the naked feet of doolie-bearers and the rush of a galloping horse.

"Wot's up?" asked twenty tents; and through twenty tents ran the answer: "Wick, 'e's down."

They brought the news to Revere and he groaned. "Any one but Bobby and I shouldn't have cared! The sergeant-major was right."

"Not going out this journey," gasped Bobby, as he was lifted from the doolie. "Not going out this journey." Then with an air of supreme conviction: "I can't, you see."

"Not if I can do anything!" said the surgeon-major, who had hastened over from the mess where he had been dining.

He and the regimental surgeon fought together with death for the life of Bobby Wick. Their ministrations were interrupted by a hairy apparition in a blue-gray dressing-gown who stared in round-eyed horror at the bed and cried: "Ow, my Gawd! It can't be 'im!" until an indignant hospital orderly whisked him away.

If care of man and desire to live could have done aught, Bobby would have been saved. As it was, he made a fight of three days, and the surgeon-major's brow uncreased. "We'll save him yet," he said; and the surgeon, who, though he ranked with the captain, had a very youthful heart, went out upon the word and pranced joyously in the mud.

"Not going out this journey," whispered Bobby Wick, gallantly, at the end of the third day.

"Bravo!" said the surgeon-major. "That's the way to look at it, Bobby."

As evening fell a gray shade gathered round Bobby's mouth, and he turned his face to the tent wall wearily. The surgeon-major frowned.

"I'm awfully tired," said Bobby, very faintly. "What's the use of bothering me with medicine? I—don't—want—it. Let me alone."

The desire for life had departed, and Bobby was content to drift away on the easy tide of death.

"It's no good," said the surgeon-major. "He doesn't want to live. He's meeting it, poor child." And he blew his nose.

Half a mile away the regimental band was playing the overture to the sing-song, for the men had been told that Bobby was out of danger. The clash of the brass and the wail of the horns reached Bobby's ears.

"Is there a single joy or pain,
That I should never kno—ow?
You do not love me, 'tis in vain,
Bid me good-by and go!"

An expression of hopeless irritation crossed the boy's face, and he tried to shake his head.

The surgeon-major bent down: "What is it, Bobby?"

"Not that waltz," muttered Bobby. "That's our own—our very ownest own. . . . Mummy dear."

With this oracular sentence he sunk into the stupor that gave place to death early next morning.

Revere, his eyes red at the rims and his nose very white, went into Bobby's tent to write a letter to Papa Wick, which should bow the white head of the ex-commissioner of Chota-Buldana in the keenest sorrow of his life. Bobby's little store of papers lay in confusion on the table, and among them a half-finished letter. The last sentence ran: "So you see, darling, there is really no fear, because as long as I know you care for me and I care for you, nothing can touch me."

Revere stayed in the tent for an hour. When he came out, his eyes were redder than ever.

. . . . . .

Private Conklin sat on a turned-down bucket, and listened to a not unfamiliar tune. Private Conklin was a convalescent and should have been tenderly treated.

"Ho!" said Private Conklin. "There's another bloomin' orf'cer da—ed."

The bucket shot from under him, and his eyes filled with a smithyful of sparks. A tall man in a blue-gray bed-gown was regarding him with deep disfavor.

"You ought to take shame for yourself, Conky! Orf'cer? Bloomin' orf'cer? I'll learn you to misname the likes of 'im. Hangel! Bloomin' hangel! That's wot 'e is!"

And the hospital orderly was so satisfied with the justice of the punishment that he did not even order Private Dormer back to his cot.

IN BLACK AND WHITE

DEDICATION

To my moft deare Father—When I was in your Houfe and we went abroade together, in the outfkirtes of the Citie, among the Gentoo Wreftlours, you had poynted me how in all Empryzes he gooing forth flang backe alwaies a Word to hym that had infruct hym in his Crafte to the better Sneckynge of a Victorie or at the leafte the auoidance of anie greate Defeate: And prefentlie each man wolde run to his *Vftad* (which is as we shoulde fay *Mafter*) and geat fuch as he deferued of Admonefhment, Reprouf and Council, concernynge the Gripp, the Houlde, Crofs-buttock and Fall, and then lay to afrefhe.

In lyke maner I, drawynge back a lytel, from this my Rabble and Encompafment of Labour, have runn afyde to you who were euer my *Vftad* and Speake as it were in your priuie Eare [yet that others may knowe] that if I have here

done aught of Faire Crafte and Reventiall it is come from your hande as trewly [but by i. Degree remouen] as though it had been the coperture of thys Booke that you haue made for me in loue. How may I here tell of that Tender Diligence which in my wauerynge and inconftante viages was in all tymes about me to showe the pafsions and Occafions, Shifts, Humours, and Sports that in due proporcion combinate haue bred that Rare and Terrible Myftery the which, for lacke of a more compleat Venderftandinge, the Worlde has cauled Man: aswel the maner in which you shoulde goo about to pourtraie the same, a lytel at a tyme in Feare and Decencie. By what hand, when I wolde have dabbled a Greene and unverfed Pen in all Earthe Heauen and Hell, bicaufe of the pitiful Confidence of Youthe, was I bounde in and reftrict to wayte tyl I coulde in fome fort difcerne from the Shadowe, that is not by any peynes to be toucht, the small Kernel and Subftance that mighte conforme to the sclendernefs of my Capacitie. All thys and other Council (that, though I dyd then not followe, Tyme hath since fadlie prouen trewe) is my unpayable Debt to you (moft deare Father) and for marke I have set afyde for you, if you will take it, thys my thirde Booke. The more thys and no other fenfe it is of common knowledge that Men do rather efteem a Pebble gathered under the Burnynge Lyne (or anie place that they haue gone farr to travel in) than the Paue-way of theyr owne Citie, though that may be the better wrought. Your Charitie and the large Tendernefs that I haue nowhere founde fenfe I haue gone from your Houfe shall look upon it fauorably and ouerpafs the Blemyfhes, Spottes, Foul Crafte, and Maculations that do as thoroughly marke it as anie Toil of Me. None the lefs it is fett prefomptuoufly before that Wilde Beafte the Publick which, though when aparte and one by one examined is but compoft of such meere Men and Women as you in theyr outwarde form peynt and I would fayne peynt in theyr inward workynges, yet in totalitie, is a Great and thanklefse God (likye unto Dagon) upon whofe Altars a man muft offer of his Befte alone if the Prieftes

(which they caul Reuiewers) pack him emptie awai. If I faile in thys Seruyce you shall take me afyde and giue me more Inftruction, which is but the olde Counfel unreguarded and agayne made playne: As our *Vftads* take hym whofe Nofe is rubben in the dyrte and speak in hys Eare. But thys I knowe, that if I fail or if I geat my Wage from the God forefayd; and thus dance perpetually before that Altar till He be wearyed, the Wifdom that made in my Vfe, when I was neere to liften, and the Sweep and Swing temperate of the Pen that, when I was afarr, gaue me alwaies and untyryng the most delectable Tillage of that Wifdom shall neuer be lackynge to me in Lyfe.

And though I am more rich herein than the richeft, my prefent Pouertie can but make return in thys lytel Booke which your owne Toil has nobilitated beyon the deferuynge of the Writer your Son.

INTRODUCTION

BY KADIR BAKSH, KHITMATGAR

HAZUR—Through your favor this is a book written by my sahib. I know that he wrote it, because it was his custom to write far into the night; I greatly desiring to go to my house. But there was no order; therefore it was my fate to sit without the door until the work was accomplished. Then came I and made shut all the papers in the office-box, and these papers, by the peculiar operation of Time and owing to the skillful manner in which I picked them up from the floor, became such a book as you now see. God alone knows what is written therein, for I am a poor man and the sahib is my father and my mother, and I have no concern with his writings until he has left his table and gone to bed.

Nabi Baksh, clerk, says that it is a book about the black men—common people. This is a manifest lie, for by what

road can my sahib have acquired knowledge of the common people? Have I not, for several years, been perpetually with the sahib; and throughout that time have I not stood between him and the other servants who would persecute him with complaints or vex him with idle tales about my work? Did I not smite Dunnoo, the groom, only yesterday in the matter of the badness of the harness-composition which I had procured? I am the head of the sahib's household and hold his purse. Without me he does not know where are his rupees or his clean collars. So great is my power over the sahib and the love that he bears to me! Have I ever told the sahib about the customs of servants or black men? Am I a fool? I have said "very good talk" upon all occasions. I have always cut smooth his wristbands with scissors, and timely warned him of the passing away of his tobacco that he might not be left smokeless upon a Sunday. More than this I have not done. The sahib cannot go out to dinner lacking my aid. How then should he know aught that I did not tell him? Certainly Nabi Baksh is a liar.

None the less this is a book, and the sahib wrote it, for his name is in it, and it is not his washing-book. Now, such is the wisdom of the sahib-log, that, upon opening this thing, they will instantly discover the purport. Yet I would of their favor beg them to observe how correct is the order of the pages, which I have counted, from the first to the last. Thus, One is followed by Two and Two by Three, and so forward to the end of the book. Even as I picked the pages one by one with great trouble from the floor, when the sahib had gone to bed, so have they been placed; and there is not a fault in the whole account. And this is my work. It was a great burden, but I accomplished it; and if the sahib gains honor by that which he has written—and God knows what he is always writing about—I, Kadir Baksh, his servant, also have a claim to honor.

DRAY WARA YOW DEE

For jealousy is the rage of a man; therefore he will not spare it the day of vengeance.—*Prov. vii.* 34

ALMONDS and raisins, sahib? Grapes from Cabul? Or a pony of the rarest if the sahib will only come with me. He is thirteen three, sahib, plays polo, goes in a cart, carries a lady and—Holy Kurshed and the Blessed Imams, it is the sahib himself! My heart is made fat and my eye glad. May you never be tired! As is cold water in the Tirah, so is the sight of a friend in a far place. And what do you in this accursed land? South of Delhi, sahib, you know the saying —"Rats are the men and trulls the women." It was an order? Ahoo! An order is an order till one is strong enough to disobey. Oh, my brother, oh, my friend, we have met in an auspicious hour! Is all well in the heart and the body and the house? In a lucky day have we two come together again.

I am to go with you? Your favor is great. Will there be picket-room in the compound? I have three horses and the bundles and the horse boy. Moreover, remember that the police here hold me a horse-thief. What do these Low-land bastards know of horse-thieves? Do you remember that time in Peshawur when Kamal hammered on the gates of Jumrud—mountebank that he was—and lifted the colonel's horses all in one night? Kamal is dead now, but his nephew has taken up the matter, and there will be more horses a-missing if the Khaiber Levies do not look to it.

The peace of God and the favor of his Prophet be upon this house and all that is in it! Shafiz-ullah, rope the mottled mare under the tree and draw water. The horses

can stand in the sun, but double the felts over the loins. Nay, my friend, do not trouble to look them over. They are to sell to the officer fools who know so many things of the horse. The mare is heavy in foal; the gray is a devil unlicked; and the dun—but you know the trick of the peg. When they are sold I go back to Pubbi, or, it may be, the Valley of Peshawur.

Oh, friend of my heart, it is good to see you again. I have been bowing and lying all day to the officer-sahibs in respect to those horses; and my mouth is dry for straight talk. *Auggrh!* Before a meal tobacco is good. Do not join me, for we are not in our own country. Sit in the veranda and I will spread my cloth here. But first I will drink. In the name of God returning thanks, thrice! This is sweet water, indeed—sweet as the water of Sheoran when it comes from the snows.

They are all well and pleased in the North—Khoda Baksh and the others. Yar Khan has come down with the horses from Kurdistan—six-and-thirty head only, and a full half pack-ponies—and has said openly in the Kashmir Serai that you English should send guns and blow the Amir into hell. There are fifteen tolls now on the Kabul road; and at Dakka, when he thought he was clear, Yar Khan was stripped of all his Balkh stallions by the governor! This is a great injustice, and Yar Khan is hot with rage. And of the others: Mahbub Ali is still at Pubbi, writing God knows what. Tuglup Khan is in jail for the business of the Kohat Police Post. Faiz Beg came down from Ismail-ki-Dhera with a Bokhariot belt for thee, my brother, at the closing of the year, but none knew whither thou hadst gone; there was no news left behind. The cousins have taken a new run near Pakpattan to breed mules for the government carts, and there is a story in Bazar of a priest. Oho! Such a salt tale! Listen. . . .

Sahib, why do you ask that? My clothes are foul because of the dust on the road. My eyes are sad because of the glare of the sun. My feet are swollen because I have washed them in bitter water, and my cheeks are hollow

because the food here is bad. Fire burn your money! What do I want with it? I am rich and I thought you were my friend; but you are like the others—a sahib. Is a man sad? Give him money, say the sahibs. Is he dishonored? Give him money, say the sahibs. Hath he a wrong upon his head? Give him money, say the sahibs. Such are the sahibs, and such art thou—even thou.

Nay, do not look at the feet of the dun. Pity it is that I ever taught you to know the legs of a horse. Footsore? Be it so. What of that? The roads are hard. And the mare footsore? She bares a double burden, sahib.

And now I pray you, give me permission to depart. Great favor and honor has the sahib done me, and graciously has he shown his belief that the horses are stolen. Will it please him to send me to the Thana? To call a sweeper and have me led away by one of these lizard-men? I am the sahib's friend. I have drunk water in the shadow of his house, and he has blackened my face. Remains there anything more to do? Will the sahib give me eight annas to make smooth the injury and—complete the insult? . . .

Forgive me, my brother. I knew not—I know not now—what I say. Yes, I lied to you! I will put dust on my head—and I am an Afridi! The horses have been marched footsore from the valley to this place, and my eyes are dim, my body aches for the want of sleep, and my heart is dried up with sorrow and shame. But, as it was my shame so by God the Dispenser of Justice—by Allah-al-Mumit, it shall be my own revenge!

We have spoken together with naked hearts before this, and our hands have dipped into the same dish and thou hast been to me as a brother. Therefore I pay thee back with lies and ingratitude—as a Paythan. Listen now! When the grief of a soul is too heavy for endurance it may be a little eased by speech; and, moreover, the mind of a true man is as a well, and the pebble of confession dropped therein sinks and is no more seen. From the valley have I come on foot, league by league, with a fire in my chest like

the fire of the Pit. And why? Hast thou, then, so quickly forgotten our customs, among this folk who sell their wives and their daughters for silver? Come back with me to the North and be among men once more. Come back, when this matter is accomplished and I call for thee! The bloom of the peach-orchards is upon all the valley, and here is only dust and a great stink. There is a pleasant wind among the mulberry-trees, and the streams are bright with snow-water, and the caravans go up and the caravans go down, and a hundred fires sparkle in the gut of the pass, and tent-peg answers hammer-nose, and pack-horse squeals to pack-horse across the drift smoke of the evening. It is good in the North now. Come back with me. Let us return to our own people! Come!

. . . . . .

Whence is my sorrow? Does a man tear out his heart and make fritters thereof over a slow fire for aught other than a woman? Do not laugh, friend of mine, for your time will also be. A woman of the Abazai was she, and I took her to wife to stanch the feud between our village and the men of Ghor. I am no longer young. The lime has touched my beard. True. I had no need of the wedding? Nay, but I loved her. What saith Rahman—"Into whose heart Love enters, there is Folly and naught else. By a glance of the eye she hath blinded thee; and by the eyelids and the fringe of the eyelids taken thee into the captivity without ransom, and naught else." Dost thou remember that song at the sheep-roasting in the Pindi camp among the Uzbegs of the Amir?

The Abazai are dogs and their women the servants of sin. There was a lover of her own people, but of that her father told me naught. My friend, curse for me in your prayers, as I curse at each praying from the Fakr to the Isha, the name of Daoud Shah, Abazai, whose head is still upon his neck, whose hands are still upon his wrists, who has done me dishonor, who has made my name a laughing-stock among the women of Little Malikand.

I went into Hindoostan at the end of two months—to Cherat. I was gone twelve days only; but I had said that I would be fifteen days absent. This I did to try her, for it is written: "Trust not the incapable." Coming up the gorge alone in the falling of the light, I heard the voice of a man singing at the door of my house; and it was the voice of Daoud Shah, and the song that he sung was "Dray wara yow dee"—all three are one. It was as though a heel-rope had been slipped round my heart and all the devils were drawing it tight past endurance. I crept silently up the hill-road, but the fuse of my match-lock was wetted with the rain, and I could not slay Daoud Shah from afar. Moreover, it was in my mind to kill the woman also. Thus he sung, sitting outside my house, and, anon, the woman opened the door, and I came nearer, crawling on my belly among the rocks. I had only my knife to my hand. But a stone slipped under my foot, and the two looked down the hill-side, and he, leaving his match-lock, fled from my anger, because he was afraid for the life that was in him. But the woman moved not till I stood in front of her, crying: "Oh, woman, what is this that thou hast done?" And she, void of fear, though she knew my thought, laughed, saying: "It is a little thing. I loved him, and thou art a dog and cattle-thief coming by night. Strike!" And I, being still blinded by her beauty, for, oh, my friend, the women of the Abazai are very fair, said: "Hast thou no fear?" And she answered: "None—but only the fear that I do not die." Then said I: "Have no fear." And she bowed her head, and I smote it off at the neck-bone so that it leaped between my feet. Thereafter the rage of our people came upon me, and I hacked off the breasts, that the men of Little Malikand might know the crime, and cast the body into the water-course that flows to the Kabul River. "Dray wara yow dee! Dray wara yow dee!" The body without the head, the soul without light, and my own darkling heart—all three are one—all three are one!

That night, making no halt, I went to Ghor and de-

manded news of Daoud Shah. Men said: "He is gone to Pubbi for horses. What wouldst thou of him? There is peace between the villages." I made answer: "Ay! The peace of treachery and the love that the Devil Atala bore to Gurel." And I fired thrice into the gate and laughed and went my way.

In those hours, brother and friend of my heart's heart, the moon and the stars were as blood above me, and in my mouth was the taste of dry earth. Also, I broke no bread, and my drink was the rain of the Valley of Ghor upon my face.

At Pubbi I found Mahbub Ali, the writer, sitting upon his charpoy and gave up my arms according to your law. But I was not grieved, for it was in my heart that I should kill Daoud Shah with my bare hands thus—as a man strips a bunch of raisins. Mahbub Ali said: "Daoud Shah has even now gone hot-foot to Peshawur, and he will pick up his horses upon the road to Delhi, for it is said that the Bombay Tramway Company are buying horses there by the truck-load; eight horses to the truck." And that was a true saying.

Then I saw that the hunting would be no little thing, for the man was gone into your borders to save himself against my wrath. And shall he save himself so? Am I not alive? Though he run northward to the Dora and the snow, or southerly to the Black Water, I will follow him, as a lover follows the footsteps of his mistress, and coming upon him I will take him tenderly—Aho! so tenderly!—in my arms, saying: "Well hast thou done and well shalt thou be repaid." And out of that embrace Daoud Shah shall not go forth with the breath in his nostrils. *Auggrh!* Where is the pitcher? I am as thirsty as a mother-mare in the first month.

Your law! What is your law to me? When the horses fight on the runs do they regard the boundary pillars; or do the kites of Ali Musjid forbear because the carrion lies under the shadow of the Ghor Kuttri? The matter began across

the border. It shall finish where God pleases. Here, in my own country, or in hell. All three are one.

Listen now, sharer of the sorrow of my heart, and I will tell of the hunting. I followed to Peshawur from Pubbi, and I went to and fro about the streets of Peshawur like a houseless dog, seeking for my enemy. Once I thought that I saw him washing his mouth in the conduit in the big square, but when I came up he was gone. It may be that it was he, and, seeing my face, he had fled.

A girl of the bazaar said that he would go to Nowshera. I said: "Oh, heart's heart, does Daoud Shah visit thee?" and she said: "Even so." I said: "I would fain see him, for we be friends parted for two years. Hide me, I pray, here in the shadow of the window shutter, and I will wait for his coming." And the girl said: "Oh, Pathan, look into my eyes!" And I turned, leaning upon her breast, and looked into her eyes, swearing that I spoke the very Truth of God. But she answered: "Never friend waited friend with such eyes. Lie to God and the Prophet, but to a woman ye cannot lie. Get hence! There shall no harm befall Daoud Shah by cause of me."

I would have strangled that girl but for the fear of your police; and thus the hunting would have come to naught. Therefore I only laughed and departed, and she leaned over the window-bar in the night and mocked me down the street. Her name is Jamun. When I have made my account with the man I will return to Peshawur and—her lovers shall desire her no more for her beauty's sake. She shall not be Jamun, but Ak, the cripple among trees. Ho! Ho! Ak shall she be!

At Peshawur I bought the horses and grapes, and the almonds and dried fruits, that the reason of my wanderings might be open to the government, and that there might be no hinderance upon the road. But when I came to Nowshera he was gone, and I knew not where to go. I stayed one day at Nowshera, and in the night a voice spoke in my ears as I slept among the horses. All night it flew round

my head and would not cease from whispering. I was upon my belly, sleeping as the devils sleep, and it may have been that the voice was the voice of a devil. It said: "Go south, and thou shalt come upon Daoud Shah." Listen, my brother and chiefest among friends—listen! Is the tale a long one? Think how it was long to me. I have trodden every league of the road from Pubbi to this place; and from Nowshera my guide was only the voice and the lust of vengeance.

To the Uttock I went, but that was no hinderance to me. Ho! Ho! A man may turn the word twice, even in his trouble. The Uttock was no *uttock* (obstacle) to me; and I heard the voice above the noise of the waters beating on the big rock, saying: "Go to the right." So I went to Pindigheb, and in those days my sleep was taken from me utterly, and the head of the woman of the Abazai was before me night and day, even as it had fallen between my feet. "Dray wara yow dee! Dray wara yow dee!" Fire, ashes, and my couch, all three are one—all three are one!

Now I was far from the winter path of the dealers who had gone to Sialkot and so south by the rail and the Big Road to the line of cantonments; but there was a sahib in camp at Pindigheb who bought from me a white mare at a good price, and told me that one Daoud Shah had passed to Shahpur with horses. Then I saw that the warning of the voice was true, and made swift to come to the Salt Hills. The Jhelum was in flood, but I could not wait, and, in the crossing, a bay stallion was washed down and drowned. Herein was God hard to me—not in respect of the beast, of that I had no care—but in this snatching. While I was upon the right bank urging the horses into the water, Daoud Shah was upon the left; for—*Alghias! Alghias!*—the hoofs of my mare scattered the hot ashes of his fires when we came up the hither bank in the light of morning. But he had fled. His feet were made swift by the terror of death. And I went south from Shahpur as the kite flies. I dared not turn aside, lest I should miss my vengeance—which is my right. From Shahpur I skirted by the Jhelum, for I thought that

he would avoid the Desert of the Rechna. But, presently, at Sahiwal, I turned away upon the road to Jhang, Samundri, and Gugera, till, upon a night, the mottled mare breasted the fence of the rail that runs to Montgomery. And that place was Okara, and the head of the woman of the Abazai lay upon the sand between my feet.

Thence I went to Fazilka, and they said that I was mad to bring starved horses there. The Voice was with me, and I was not mad, but only wearied, because I could not find Daoud Shah. It was written that I should not find him at Rania nor Bahadurgarh, and I came into Delhi from the west, and there also I found him not. My friend, I have seen many strange things in my wanderings. I have seen devils rioting across the Rechna as the stallions riot in spring. I have heard the Djinns calling to each other from holes in the sand, and I have seen them pass before my face. There are no devils, say the sahibs? They are very wise, but they do not know all things about devils or—horses. Ho! Ho! I say to you who are laughing at my misery, that I have seen the devils at high noon whooping and leaping on the shoals of the Chenab. And was I afraid? My brother, when the desire of a man is set upon one thing alone, he fears neither God nor man nor devil. If my vengeance failed, I would splinter the gates of paradise with the butt of my gun, or I would cut my way into hell with my knife, and I would call upon those who govern there for the body of Daoud Shah. What love so deep as hate?

Do not speak. I know the thought in your heart. Is the white of this eye clouded? How does the blood beat at the wrist? There is no madness in my flesh, but only the vehemence of the desire that has eaten me up. Listen!

South of Delhi I knew not the country at all. Therefore I cannot say where I went, but I passed through many cities. I knew only that it was laid upon me to go south. When the horses could march no more, I threw myself upon the earth, and waited till the day. There was no sleep with me in that journeying; and that was a heavy burden. Dost

thou know, brother of mine, the evil of wakefulness that cannot break—when the bones are sore for lack of sleep, and the skin of the temples twitches with weariness, and yet—there is no sleep—there is no sleep? "Dray wara yow dee! Dray wara yow dee!" The eye of the sun, the eye of the moon, and my own unrestful eyes—all three are one—all three are one!

There was a city the name whereof I have forgotten, and there the Voice called all night. That was ten days ago. It has cheated me afresh.

I have come hither from a place called Hamirbur, and, behold, it is my fate that I should meet with thee to my comfort, and the increase of friendship. This is a good omen. By the joy of looking upon thy face the weariness has gone from my feet and the sorrow of my so long travel is forgotten. Also my heart is peaceful; for I know that the end is near.

It may be that I shall find Daoud Shah in this city going northward, since a Hillman will ever head back to his hills when the spring warns. And shall he see those hills of our country? Surely I shall overtake him! Surely my vengeance is safe! Surely God hath him in the hollow of His hand against my claiming. There shall no harm befall Daoud Shah till I come; for I would fain kill him quick and whole with the life sticking firm in his body. A pomegranate is sweetest when the cloves break away unwilling from the rind. Let it be in the daytime, that I may see his face, and my delight may be crowned.

And when I have accomplished the matter and my honor is made clean, I shall return thanks unto God, the holder of the scale of the law, and I shall sleep. From the night, through the day, and into the night again I shall sleep; and no dream shall trouble me.

And now, oh, my brother, the tale is all told. *Ahi! Ahi! Alghias! Ahi!*

THE JUDGMENT OF DUNGARA

See the pale martyr with his shirt on fire.—*Printer's Error*

THEY tell the tale even now among the *sâl* groves of the Berbulda Hill, and for corroboration point to the roofless and windowless mission-house. The great God Dungara, the God of Things as They Are, most terrible, one-eyed, bearing the red elephant tusk, did it all; and he who refuses to believe in Dungara will assuredly be smitten by the madness of Yat—the madness that fell upon the sons and the daughters of the Buria Kol when they turned aside from Dungara and put on clothes. So says Athon Dazê, who is High Priest of the Shrine and Warden of the Red Elephant tusk. But if you ask the assistant collector and agent in charge of the Buria Kol, he will laugh—not because he bears any malice against missions, but because he himself saw the vengeance of Dungara executed upon the spiritual children of the Rev. Justus Krenk, pastor of the Tubingen Mission, and upon Lotta, his virtuous wife.

Yet if ever a man merited good treatment of the gods it was the Reverend Justus, one time of Heidelberg, who, on the faith of a call, went into the wilderness and took the blonde, blue-eyed Lotta with him. "We will these heathen now by idolatrous practices so darkened better make," said Justus in the early days of his career. "Yes," he added, with conviction, "they shall be good and shall with their hands to work learn. For all good Christians must work." And upon a stipend more modest even than that of an English lay-reader, Justus Krenk kept house beyond Kamala and the gorge of Malair, beyond the Berbulda River close to the foot of the blue hill of Panth on whose summit stands

the Temple of Dungara—in the heart of the country of the Buria Kol—the naked, good-tempered, timid, shameless, lazy Buria Kol.

Do you know what life at a mission outpost means? Try to imagine a loneliness exceeding that of the smallest station to which government has ever sent you — isolation that weighs upon the waking eyelids and drives you perforce headlong into the labors of the day. There is no post, there is no one of your own color to speak to, there are no roads: there is, indeed, food to keep you alive, but it is not pleasant to eat; and whatever of good or beauty or interest there is in your life, must come from yourself and the grace that may be planted in you.

In the morning, with a patter of soft feet, the converts, the doubtful, and the open scoffers, troop up to the veranda. You must be infinitely kind and patient, and, above all, clear-sighted, for you deal with the simplicity of childhood, the experience of man, and the subtlety of the savage. Your congregation have a hundred material wants to be considered; and it is for you, as you believe in your personal responsibility to your Maker, to pick out of the clamoring crowd any grain of spirituality that may lie therein. If to the cure of souls you add that of bodies, your task will be all the more difficult, for the sick and the maimed will profess any and every creed for the sake of healing, and will laugh at you because you are simple enough to believe them.

As the day wears and the impetus of the morning dies away, there will come upon you an overwhelming sense of the uselessness of your toil. This must be striven against, and the only spur in your side will be the belief that you are playing against the devil for the living soul. It is a great, a joyous belief; but he who can hold it unwavering for four-and-twenty consecutive hours must be blessed with an abundantly strong physique and equable nerve.

Ask the gray heads of the Bannockburn Medical Crusade what manner of life their preachers lead; speak to the Racine Gospel Agency, those lean Americans whose boast is

that they go where no Englishman dare follow; get a pastor of the Tubingen Mission to talk of his experiences—if you can. You will be referred to the printed reports, but these contain no mention of the men who have lost youth and health, all that a man may lose except faith, in the wilds; of English maidens who have gone forth and died in the fever-stricken jungle of the Panth Hills, knowing from the first that death was almost a certainty. Few pastors will tell you of these things any more than they will speak of that young David of St. Bees, who, set apart for the Lord's work, broke down in the utter desolation, and returned half distraught to the head mission crying: "There is no God, but I have walked with the devil!"

The reports are silent here, because heroism, failure, doubt, despair and self-abnegation on the part of a mere cultured white man are things of no weight as compared to the saving of one half-human soul from a fantastic faith in wood-spirits, goblins of the rock, and river-fiends.

And Gallio, the assistant collector of the country-side, "cared for none of these things." He had been long in the district, and the Buria Kol loved him and brought him offerings of speared fish, orchids from the dim moist heart of the forests, and as much game as he could eat. In return, he gave them quinine, and with Athon Daze, the high priest, controlled their simple policies.

"When you have been some years in the country," said Gallio at the Krenks' table, "you grow to find one creed as good as another. I'll give you all the assistance in my power, of course, but don't hurt my Buria Kol. They are a good people and they trust me."

"I will them the Word of the Lord teach," said Justus, his round face beaming with enthusiasm, "and I will assuredly to their prejudices no wrong hastily without thinking make. But, oh, my friend, this in the mind impartiality-of-creed-judgment-belooking is very bad."

"Heigh-ho!" said Gallio, "I have their bodies and the district to see to, but you can try what you can do for their

souls. Only don't behave as your predecessor did, or I'm afraid that I can't guarantee your life."

"And that?" said Lotta, sturdidly, handing him a cup of tea.

"He went up to the Temple of Dungara—to be sure he was new to the country—and began hammering old Dungara over the head with an umbrella; so the Buria Kol turned out and hammered him rather savagely. I was in the district, and he sent a runner to me with a note saying: 'Persecuted for the Lord's sake. Send wing of regiment.' The nearest troops were about two hundred miles off, but I guessed what he had been doing. I rode to Panth and talked to old Athon Daze like a father, telling him that a man of his wisdom ought to have known that the sahib had sunstroke and was mad. You never saw a people more sorry in your life. Athon Daze apologized, sent wood and milk and fowls and all sorts of things; and I gave five rupees to the shrine and told Macnamara that he had been injudicious. He said that I had bowed down in the House of Rimmon; but if he had only just gone over the brow of the hill and insulted Palin Deo, the idol of the Suria Kol, he would have been impaled on a charred bamboo long before I could have done anything, and then I should have had to have hanged some of the poor brutes. Be gentle with them, padri—but I don't think you'll do much."

"Not I," said Justus, "but my Master. We will with the little children begin. Many of them will be sick—that is so. After the children the mothers; and then the men. But I would greatly that you were in internal sympathies with us prefer."

Gallio departed to risk his life in mending the rotten bamboo bridges of his people, in killing a too persistent tiger here or there, in sleeping out in the reeking jungle, or in tracking the Suria Kol raiders who had taken a few heads from their brethren of the Buria clan. A knock-kneed shambling young man was Gallio, naturally devoid of creed or reverence, with a longing for absolute power which his undesirable district gratified.

"No one wants my post," he used to say grimly, "and my collector only pokes his nose in when he's quite certain that there is no fever. I'm monarch of all I survey, and Athon Dazé is my viceroy."

Because Gallio prided himself on his supreme disregard of human life—though he never extended the theory beyond his own—he naturally rode forty miles to the mission with a tiny brown baby on his saddle-bow.

"Here is something for you, padri," said he. "The Kols leave their surplus children to die. Don't see why they shouldn't, but you may rear this one. I picked it up beyond the Berbulda fork. I've a notion that the mother has been following me through the woods ever since."

"It is the first of the fold," said Justus, and Lotta caught up the screaming morsel to her bosom and hushed it craftily; while, as a wolf hangs in the field, Matui, who had borne it and in accordance with the law of her tribe had exposed it to die, panted wearily and footsore in the bamboo brake, watching the house with hungry mother-eyes. What would the omnipotent assistant collector do? Would the little man in the black coat eat her daughter alive, as Athon Dazé said was the custom of all men in black coats?

Matui waited among the bamboos through the long night; and, in the morning, there came forth a fair white woman, the like of whom Matui had never seen, and in her arms was Matui's daughter clad in spotless raiment. Lotta knew little of the tongue of the Buria Kol, but when mother calls to mother, speech is easy to understand. By the hands stretched timidly to the hem of her gown, by the passionate gutturals and the longing eyes, Lotta understood with whom she had to deal. So Matui took her child again—would be a servant, even a slave, to this wonderful white woman, for her own tribe would recognize her no more. And Lotta wept with her exhaustively, after the German fashion, which includes much blowing of the nose.

"First the child, then the mother, and last the man, and to the glory of God all," said Justus the Hopeful. And the

man came, with a bow and arrows, very angry indeed, for there was no one to cook for him.

But the tale of the mission is a long one, and I have no space to show how Justus, forgetful of his injudicious predecessor, grievously smote Moto, the husband of Matui, for his brutality; how Moto was startled, but, being released from the fear of instant death, took heart and became the faithful ally and first convert of Justus; how the little gathering grew, to the huge disgust of Athon Dazé; how the priest of the God of Things as They Are argued subtlely with the priest of the God of Things as They Should Be, and was worsted; how the dues of the Temple of Dungara fell away in fowls and fish and honeycomb; how Lotta lightened the curse of Eve among the women, and how Justus did his best to introduce the curse of Adam; how the Buria Kol rebelled at this, saying that their god was an idle god, and how Justus partially overcame their scruples against work, and taught them that the black earth was rich in other produce than pig-nuts only.

All these things belong to the history of many months, and throughout those months the white-haired Athon Daze meditated revenge for the tribal neglect of Dungara. With savage cunning he feigned friendship toward Justus, even hinting at his own conversion; but to the congregation of Dungara he said, darkly: "They of the padri's flock have put on clothes and worship a busy God. Therefore Dungara will afflict them grievously till they throw themselves howling into the waters of the Berbulda." At night the Red Elephant Tusk boomed and groaned among the hills, and the faithful waked and said: "The God of Things as They Are matures revenge against the backsliders. Be merciful, Dungara, to us thy children, and give us all their crops!"

Late in the cold weather the collector and his wife came into the Buria Kol country. "Go and look at Krenk's mission," said Gallio. "He is doing good work in his own way, and I think he'd be pleased if you opened the bamboo chapel

that he has managed to run up. At any rate, you'll see a civilized Buria Kol."

Great was the stir in the mission. "Now he and the gracious lady will that we have done good work with their own eyes see, and—yes—we will him our converts in all their new clothes by their own hands constructed exhibit. It will a great day be—for the Lord always," said Justus; and Lotta said "Amen."

Justus had, in his quiet way, felt jealous of the Basel Weaving Mission, his own converts being unhandy; but Athon Daze had latterly induced some of them to hackle the glossy silky fibers of a plant that grew plenteously on the Panth Hill. It yielded a cloth white and smooth almost as the *tappa* of the South Seas, and that day the converts were to wear for the first time clothes made therefrom. Justus was proud of his work.

"They shall in white clothes clothed to meet the collector and his well-born lady come down, singing 'Now thank we all our God.' Then he will the chapel open, and—yes—even Gallio to believe will begin. Stand so, my children, two by two, and—Lotta, why do they thus themselves scratch? It is not seemly to wriggle, Nala, my child. The collector will be here and be pained."

The collector, his wife, and Gallio climbed the hill to the mission station. The converts were drawn up in two lines, a shining band nearly forty strong. "Hah!" said the collector, whose acquisitive bent of mind led him to believe that he had fostereed the institution from the first.

"Advancing, I see, by leaps and bounds."

Never was truer word spoken! The mission was advancing exactly as he had said—at first by little hops and shuffles of shame-faced uneasiness, but soon by the leaps of fly-stung horses and the bounds of maddened kangaroos. From the hill of Panth the Red Elephant Tusk delivered a dry and anguished blare. The ranks of the converts wavered, broke and scattered with yells and shrieks of pain, while Justus and Lotta stood horror-stricken.

"It is the judgment of Dungara!" shouted a voice. "I burn! I burn! To the river or we die!"

The mob wheeled and headed for the rocks that overhung the Berbulda, writhing, stamping, twisting and shedding its garments as it ran, pursued by the thunder of the trumpet of Dungara. Justus and Lotta fled to the collector almost in tears.

"I cannot understand! Yesterday," panted Justus, "they had the Ten Commandments— What is this? Praise the Lord all good spirits by land or by sea. Nala! Oh, shame!"

With a bound and a scream there alighted on the rocks above their heads, Nala, once the pride of the mission, a maiden of fourteen summers, good, docile, and virtuous—now naked as the dawn and spitting like a wildcat.

"Was it for this!" she raved, hurling her petticoat at Justus; "was it for this I left my people and Dungara—for the fires of your bad place? Blind ape, little earthworm, dried fish that you are, you said that I should never burn! Oh, Dungara, I burn now! I burn now! Have mercy, God of Things as They Are!"

She turned and flung herself into the Berbulda, and the trumpet of Dungara bellowed jubilantly. The last of the converts of the Tubingen Mission had put a quarter of a mile of rapid river between herself and her teachers.

"Yesterday," gulped Justus, "she taught in the school A, B, C, D. Oh! It is the work of Satan!"

But Gallio was curiously regarding the maiden's petticoat where it had fallen at his feet. He felt its texture, drew back his shirt-sleeve beyond the deep tan of his hand and pressed a fold of the cloth against the flesh. A blotch of angry red rose on the white skin.

"Ah!" said Gallio, calmly, "I thought so."

"What is it?" said Justus.

"I should call it the Shirt of Nessus, but— Where did you get the fiber of this cloth from?"

"Athon Daze," said Justus. "He showed the boys how it should manufactured be."

"The old fox! Do you know that he has given you the Nilgiri nettle—scorpion—*Girardenia heterophylla*—to work up. No wonder they squirmed! Why, it stings even when they make bridge-ropes of it, unless it's soaked for six weeks. The cunning brute! It would take about half an hour to burn through their thick hides, and then—!"

Gallio burst into laughter, but Lotta was weeping in the arms of the collector's wife, and Justus had covered his face with his hands.

"*Girardenia heterophylla!*" repeated Gallio. "Krenk, why didn't you tell me? I could have saved you this. Woven fire! Anybody but a naked Kol would have known it, and, if I'm a judge of their ways, you'll never get them back."

He looked across the river to where the converts were still wallowing and wailing in the shallows, and the laughter died out of his eyes, for he saw that the Tubingen Mission to the Buria Kol was dead.

Never again, though they hung mournfully round the deserted school for three months, could Lotta or Justus coax back even the most promising of their flock. No! The end of conversion was the fire of the bad place—fire that ran through the limbs and gnawed into the bones. Who dare a second time tempt the anger of Dungara? Let the little man and his wife go elsewhere. The Buria Kol would have none of them. An unofficial message to Athon Daze that if a hair of their heads were touched, Athon Daze and the priests of Dungara would be hanged by Gallio at the temple shrine, protected Justus and Lotta from the stumpy poisoned arrows of the Buria Kol, but neither fish nor fowl, honeycomb, salt nor young pig were brought to their doors any more. And, alas! man cannot live by grace alone if meat be wanting.

"Let us go, mine wife," said Justus; "there is no good here, and the Lord has willed that some other man shall the work take—in good time—in His own good time. We will go away, and I will—yes—some botany bestudy."

If any one is anxious to convert the Buria Kol afresh,

there lies at least the core of a mission-house under the hill of Panth. But the chapel and school have long since fallen back into jungle.

AT HOWLI THANA

His own shoe, his own head.—*Native Proverb*

As a messenger, if the heart of the Presence be moved to so great favor. And on six rupees. Yes, sahib, for I have three little, little children whose stomachs are always empty, and corn is now but twenty pounds to the rupee. I will make so clever a messenger that you shall all day long be pleased with me, and, at the end of the year, bestow a turban. I know all the roads of the station and many other things. Aha, sahib! I am clever. Give me service. I was aforetime in the police. A bad character? Now without doubt an enemy has told his tale. Never was I a scamp. I am a man of clean heart, and all my words are true. They knew this when I was in the police. They said: "Afzal Khan is a true speaker in whose words men may trust." I am a Delhi Pathan, sahib—all Delhi Pathans are good men. You have seen Delhi? Yes, it is true that there be many scamps among the Delhi Pathans. How wise is the sahib! Nothing is hid from his eyes, and he will make me his messenger, and I will take all his notes secretly and without ostentation. Nay, sahib, God is my witness that I meant no evil. I have long desired to serve under a true sahib—a virtuous sahib. Many young sahibs are as devils unchained. With these sahibs I would take no service—not though all the stomachs of my little children were crying for bread.

Why am I not still in the police? I will speak true talk. An evil came to the Thana—to Ram Baksh, the Havildar, and Maula Baksh, and Juggut Ram and Bhim Singh and Suruj Bul. Ram Baksh is in the jail for a space, and so also is Maula Baksh.

It was at the Thana of Howli, on the road that leads to Gokral-Seetarun, wherein are many dacoits. We were all brave men—Rustums. Wherefore we were sent to that Thana which was eight miles from the next Thana. All day and all night we watched for dacoits. Why does the sahib laugh? Nay, I will make a confession. The dacoits were too clever, and, seeing this, we made no further trouble. It was in the hot weather. What can a man do in the hot days? Is the sahib who is so strong—is he, even, vigorous in that hour? We made an arrangement with the dacoits for the sake of peace. That was the work of the Havildar, who was fat. Ho! ho! sahib, he is now getting thin in the jail among the carpets. The Havildar said: "Give us no trouble, and we will give you no trouble. At the end of the reaping send us a man to lead before the judge, a man of infirm mind against whom the trumped-up case will break down. Thus we shall save our honor." To this talk the dacoits agreed, and we had no trouble at the Thana, and could eat melons in peace, sitting upon our charpoys all day long. Sweet as sugar-cane are the melons of Howli.

Now, there was an assistant commissioner—a Stunt Sahib, in that district, called Yunkum Sahib. Aha! He was hard —hard even as is the sahib who, without doubt, will give me the shadow of his protection. Many eyes had Yunkum Sahib, and moved quickly through his district. Men called him the Tiger of Gokral-Seetarun, because he would arrive unannounced and make his kill, and, before sunset, would be giving trouble to the Tehsildars thirty miles away. No one knew the comings or the goings of Yunkum Sahib. He had no camp, and when his horse was weary he rode upon a devil-carriage. I do not know its name, but the sahib sat in the midst of three silver wheels that made no creaking, and drove them with his legs, prancing like a bean-fed horse —thus. A shadow of a hawk upon the fields was not more without noise than the devil-carriage of Yunkum Sahib. It was here; it was there; it was gone; and the rapport was

made, and there was trouble. Ask the Tehsildar of Rohestri how the hen-stealing came to be known, sahib.

It fell upon a night that we of the Thana slept according to custom upon our charpoys, having eaten the evening meal and drunk tobacco. When we awoke in the morning, behold, of our six rifles not one remained! Also, the big police-book that was in the Havildar's charge was gone. Seeing these things, we were very much afraid, thinking on our parts that the dacoits, regardless of honor, had come by night and put us to shame. Then said Ram Baksh, the Havildar: "Be silent! The business is an evil business, but it may yet go well. Let us make the case complete. Bring a kid and my tulwar. See you not now, oh fools? A kick for a horse, but a word is enough for a man."

We of the Thana, perceiving quickly what was in the mind of the Havildar, and greatly fearing that the service would be lost, made haste to take the kid into the inner room, and attended to the words of the Havildar. "Twenty dacoits came," said the Havildar, and we, taking his words, repeated after him according to custom. "There was a great fight," said the Havildar, "and of us no man escaped unhurt. The bars of the window were broken. Suruj Bul, see thou to that; and, oh men, put speed into your work, for a runner must go with the news to The Tiger of Gokral-Seetarun." Thereon, Suruj Bul, leaning with his shoulder, brake in the bars of the window, and I, beating her with a whip, made the Havildar's mare skip among the melon-beds till they were much trodden with hoof-prints.

These things being made, I returned to the Thana, and the goat was slain, and certain portions of the walls were blackened with fire, and each man dipped his clothes a little into the blood of the goat. Know, oh, sahib, that a wound made by man upon his own body can, by those skilled, be easily discerned from a wound wrought by another man. Therefore, the Havildar, taking his tulwar, smote one of us lightly on the forearm in the fat, and another on the leg, and a third on the back of the hand. Thus dealt he with all

of us till the blood came; and Suruj Bul, more eager than the others, took out much hair. Oh, sahib, never was so perfect an arrangement. Yea, even I would have sworn that the Thana had been treated as we said. There was smoke and breaking and blood and trampled earth.

"Ride now, Maula Baksh,'" said the Havildar, "to the house of the Stunt Sahib, and carry the news of the dacoity. Do you also, oh, Afzal Khan, run there, and take heed that you are mired with sweat and dust on your in-coming. The blood will be dry on the clothes. I will stay and send a straight report to the Dipty Sahib, and we will catch certain that ye know of, villagers, so that all may be ready against the Dipty Sahib's arrival."

Thus Maula Baksh rode and I ran hanging on the stirrup, and together we came in an evil plight before The Tiger of Gokral-Seetarun in the Rohestri tehsil. Our tale was long and correct, sahib, for we gave even the names of the dacoits and the issue of the fight, and besought him to come. But The Tiger made no sign, and only smiled after the manner of sahibs when they have a wickedness in their hearts. "Swear ye to the rapport?" said he, and we said: "Thy servants swear. The blood of the fight is but newly dry upon us. Judge thou if it be the blood of the servants of the Presence, or not." And he said: "I see. Ye have done well." But he did not call for his horse or his devil-carriage, and scour the land as was his custom. He said: "Rest now and eat bread, for ye be wearied men. I will wait the coming of the Dipty Sahib."

Now, it is the order that the Havildar of the Thana should send a straight report of all dacoities to the Dipty Sahib. At noon came he, a fat man and an old, and overbearing withal, but we of the Thana had no fear of his anger; dreading more the silences of The Tiger of Gokral-Seetarun. With him came Ram Baksh, the Havildar, and the others, guarding ten men of the village of Howli—all men evil affected toward the police of the Sirkar. As prisoners they came, the irons upon their hands, crying for mercy—Imam Baksh, the

farmer, who had denied his wife to the Havildar, and others, ill-conditioned rascals against whom we of the Thana bore spite. It was well done, and the Havildar was proud. But the Dipty Sahib was angry with the Stunt for lack of zeal, and said "Dam-Dam" after the custom of the English people, and extolled the Havildar. Yunkum Sahib lay still in his long chair. "Have the men sworn?" said Yunkum Sahib. "Ay, and captured ten evil-doers," said the Dipty Sahib. "There be more abroad in your charge. Take horse—ride, and go in the name of the Sirkar!" "Truly there be more evil-doers abroad," said Yunkum Sahib, "but there is no need of a horse. Come all men with me."

I saw the mark of a string on the temples of Imam Baksh. Does the Presence know the torture of the Cold Draw? I saw also the face of The Tiger of Gokral-Seetarun, the evil smile was upon it, and I stood back ready for what might befall. Well it was, sahib, that I did this thing. Yunkum Sahib unlocked the door of his bath-room, and smiled anew. Within lay the six rifles and the big police-book of the Thana of Howli! He had come by night in the devil-carriage that is noiseless as a ghoul, and, moving among us asleep, had taken away both the guns and the book! Twice had he come to the Thana, taking each time three rifles. The liver of the Havildar was turned to water, and he fell scrabbling in the dirt about the boots of Yunkum Sahib, crying, "Have mercy!"

And I? Sahib, I am a Delhi Pathan, and a young man with little children. The Havildar's mare was in the compound. I ran to her and rode; the black wrath of the Sirkar was behind me, and I knew not whither to go. Till she dropped and died I rode the red mare; and by the blessing of God, who is without doubt on the side of all just men, I escaped. But the Havildar and the rest are now in jail. . . . I am a scamp! It is as the Presence pleases. God will make the Presence a Lord, and give him a rich *Memsahib* as fair as a peri to wife, and many strong sons, if he makes me his orderly. The mercy of Heaven be upon the sahib! Yes, I

will only go to the bazaar and bring my children to these so-palace-like quarters, and then—the Presence is my father and my mother, and I, Afzal Khan, am his slave.

Ohe, *Sirdar-ji!* I also am of the household of the sahib.

GEMINI

Great is the justice of the White Man—greater the power of a lie.
—Native Proverb

THIS is your English justice, protector of the poor. Look at my back and loins, which are beaten with sticks—heavy sticks! I am a poor man, and there is no justice in courts.

There were two of us, and we were born of one birth, but I swear to you that I was born the first, and Ram Dass is the younger by three full breaths. The astrologer said so, and it is written in my horoscope—the horoscope of Durga Dass.

But we were alike—I and my brother, who is a beast without honor—so alike that none knew, together or apart, which was Durga Dass. I am a Mahajun of Pali in Marwar, and an honest man. This is true talk. When we were men, we left our father's house in Pali and went to the Punjab, where all the people are mud-heads and sons of asses. We took shop together in Isser Jang—I and my brother—near the big well where the governor's camp draws water. But Ram Dass, who is without truth, made quarrel with me, and we were divided. He took his books, and his pots, and his Mark, and became a *bunnia*—a money-lender—in the long street of Isser Jang, near the gateway of the road that goes to Montgomery. It was not my fault that we pulled each other's turbans. I am a Mahajun of Pali, and I always speak true talk. Ram Dass was the thief and the liar.

Now, no man, not even the little children, could at one glance see which was Ram Dass and which was Durga Dass.

But all the people of Isser Jang—may they die without sons! —said that we were thieves. They used much bad talk, but I took money on their bedsteads and their cooking-pots and the standing crop and the calf unborn, from the well in the big square to the gate of the Montgomery road. They were fools, these people—unfit to cut the toe-nails of a Marwari from Pali. I lent money to them all. A little, very little only—here a pice and there a pice.

God is my witness that I am a poor man! The money is all with Ram Dass—may his sons turn Christian, and his daughter be a burning fire and a shame in the house from generation to generation! May she die unwed, and be the mother of a multitude of bastards! Let the light go out in the house of Ram Dass, my brother. This I pray daily twice —with offerings and charms. Thus the trouble began. We divided the town of Isser Jang between us—I and my brother. There was a landholder beyond the gates, living but one short mile out, on the road that leads to Montgomery, and his name was Mohammed Shah, son of a Nawab. He was a great devil and drank wine. So long as there were women in his house, and wine and money for the marriage-feasts, he was merry and wiped his mouth. Ram Dass lent him the money, a lakh or half a lakh—how do I know?—and so long as the money was lent, the landholder cared not what he signed.

The people of Isser Jang were my portion, and the landholder and the out-town was the portion of Ram Dass; for so we had arranged. I was the poor man, for the people of Isser Jang were without wealth. I did what I could, but Ram Dass had only to wait without the door of the landholder's garden-court, and to lend him the money; taking the bonds from the hand of the steward.

In the autumn of the year after the lending, Ram Dass said to the landholder: "Pay me my money;" but the landholder gave him abuse. But Ram Dass went into the courts with the papers and the bonds—all correct—and took out decrees against the landholder; and the name of the govern-

ment was across the stamps of the decrees. Ram Dass took field by field, and mango-tree by mango-tree, and well by well; putting in his own men—debtors of the out-town of Isser Jang—to cultivate the crops. So he crept up across the land, for he had the papers, and the name of the government was across the stamps, till his men held the crops for him on all sides of the big white house of the landholder. It was well done; but when the landholder saw these things he was very angry and cursed Ram Dass after the manner of the Mohammedans.

And thus the landholder was angry, but Ram Dass laughed and claimed more fields, as was written upon the bonds. This was in the month of Phagun. I took my horse and went out to speak to the man who makes lac-bangles upon the road that leads to Montgomery, because he owed me a debt. There was in front of me, upon his horse, my brother Ram Dass. And when he saw me, he turned aside into the high crops, because there was hatred between us. And I went forward till I came to the orange-bushes by the landholder's house. The bats were flying, and the evening smoke was close down upon the land. Here met me four men—swashbucklers and Mohammedans—with their faces bound up, laying hold of my horse's bridle and crying out: "This is Ram Dass! Beat!" Me they beat with their staves—heavy staves bound about with wire at the end, such weapons as those swine of Punjabis use—till, having cried for mercy, I fell down senseless. But these shameless ones still beat me, saying: "Oh, Ram Dass, this is your interest—well weighed and counted into your hand, Ram Dass. I cried aloud that I was not Ram Dass but Durga Dass, his brother; yet they only beat me the more, and when I could make no more outcry they left me. But I saw their faces. There was Elahi Baksh who runs by the side of the landholder's white horse, and Nur Ali the keeper of the door, and Wajib Ali the very strong cook, and Abdul Latif the messenger—all of the household of the landholder. These things I can swear on the cow's tail if need be, but—*Ahi!*

Ahi!—it has been already sworn, and I am a poor man whose honor is lost.

When these four had gone away laughing, my brother Ram Dass came out of the crops and mourned over me as one dead. But I opened my eyes, and prayed him to get me water. When I had drunk, he carried me on his back, and by by-ways brought me into the town of Isser Jang. My heart was turned to Ram Dass, my brother, in that hour, because of his kindness, and I lost my enmity.

But a snake is a snake till it is dead; and a liar is a liar till the judgment of the gods takes hold of his heel. I was wrong in that I trusted my brother—the son of my mother.

When we had come to his house and I was a little restored, I told him my tale, and he said: "Without doubt, it is me whom they would have beaten. But the law courts are open, and there is the justice of the Sirkar above all; and to the law courts do thou go when this sickness is overpast."

Now when we two had left Pali in the old years, there fell a famine that ran from Jeysulmir to Gurgaon and touched Gogunda in the south. At that time the sister of my father came away and lived with us in Isser Jang; for a man must above all see that his folk do not die of want. When the quarrel between us twain came about, the sister of my father—a lean she-dog without teeth—said that Ram Dass had the right, and went with him. Into her hands—because she knew medicines and many cures—Ram Dass, my brother, put me faint with the beating and much bruised even to the pouring of blood from the mouth. When I had two days' sickness the fever came upon me; and I set aside the fever to the account written in my mind against the landholder.

The Punjabis of Isser Jang are all the sons of Belial and a she-ass, but they are very good witnesses, bearing testimony unshakenly whatever the pleaders may say. I would purchase witnesses by the score, and each man should give evidence, not only against Nur Ali, Wajib Ali, Abdul Latif

and Elahi Baksh, but against the landholder, saying that he upon his white horse had called his men to beat me; and, further, that they had robbed me of two hundred rupees. For the latter testimony I would remit a little of the debt of the man who sold the lac-bangles, and he should say that he had put the money into my hands, and had seen the robbery from afar, but, being afraid, had run away. This plan I told to my brother Ram Dass; and he said that the arrangement was good, and bade me take comfort and make swift work to be abroad again. My heart was opened to my brother in my sickness, and I told him the names of those whom I would call as witnesses—all men in my debt, but of that the magistrate sahib could have no knowledge, nor the landholder. The fever stayed with me, and after the fever I was taken with colic, and gripings very terrible. In that day I thought that my end was at hand, but I know now that she who gave me the medicines, the sister of my father —a widow with a widow's heart—had brought about my second sickness. Ram Dass, my brother, said that my house was shut and locked, and brought me the big door-key and my books, together with all the moneys that were in my house—even the money that was buried under the floor; for I was in great fear lest thieves should break in and dig. I speak true talk; there was but very little money in my house. Perhaps ten rupees—perhaps twenty. How can I tell? God's my witness that I am a poor man.

One night, when I had told Ram Dass all that was in my heart of the lawsuit that I would bring against the landholder, and Ram Dass had said that he had made the arrangement with the witnesses, giving me their names written, I was taken with a new great sickness, and they put me on the bed. When I was a little recovered—I cannot tell how many days afterward—I made inquiry for Ram Dass, and the sister of my father said that he had gone to Montgomery upon a lawsuit. I took medicine and slept very heavily without waking. When my eyes were opened, there was a great stillness in the house of Ram Dass, and none answered

when I called—not even the sister of my father. This filled me with fear, for I knew not what had happened.

Taking a stick in my hand, I went out slowly, till I came to the great square by the well, and my heart was hot in me against the landholder, because of the pain of every step I took.

I called for Jowar Singh, the carpenter, whose name was first upon the list of those who should bear evidence against the landholder, saying: "Are all things ready, and do you know what should be said?"

Jowar Singh answered: "What is this, and whence do you come, Durga Dass?"

I said: "From my bed, where I have so long lain sick because of the landholder. Where is Ram Dass, my brother, who was to have made the arrangement for the witnesses? Surely you and yours know these things?"

Then Jowar Singh said: "What has this to do with us, oh, liar? I have borne witness and I have been paid, and the landholder has, by the order of the court, paid both the five hundred rupees that he robbed from Ram Dass and yet other five hundred because of the great injury he did to your brother."

The well and the jujube-tree above it and the square of Isser Jang became dark in my eyes, but I leaned on my stick and said: "Nay! This is child's talk and senseless. It was I who suffered at the hands of the landholder, and I am come to make ready the case. Where is my brother Ram Dass?"

But Jowar Singh shook his head, and a woman cried: "What lie is here? What quarrel had the landholder with you, *bunnia?* It is only a shameless one and one without faith who profits by his brother's smarts. Have these *bunnias* no bowels?"

I cried again, saying: "By the Cow—by the Oath of the Cow, by the Temple of the Blue-throated Mahadeo—I and I only was beaten—beaten to the death! Let our talk be straight, oh, people of Isser Jang, and I will pay for the

witnesses." And I tottered where I stood, for the sickness and the pain of the beating were heavy upon me.

Then Ram Narain, who has his carpet spread under the jujube-tree by the well, and writes all letters for the men of the town, came up and said: "To-day is the one-and-fortieth day since the beating, and since these six days the case has been judged in the court, and the assistant commissioner sahib has given it for your brother Ram Dass, allowing the robbery, to which, too, I bore witness, and all things else as the witnesses said. There were many witnesses, and twice Ram Dass became senseless in the court because of his wounds, and the Stunt Sahib—the *baba* Stunt Sahib—gave him a chair before all the pleaders. Why do you howl, Durga Dass? These things fell as I have said. Was it not so?"

And Jowar Singh said: "That is truth. I was there, and there was a red cushion in the chair."

And Ram Narain said: "Great shame has come upon the landholder because of this judgment, and fearing his anger, Ram Dass, and all his house have gone back to Pali. Ram Dass told us that you also had gone first, the enmity being healed between you, to open a shop in Pali. Indeed, it were well for you that you go even now, for the landholder has sworn that if he catch any one of your house, he will hang him by the heels from the well-beam, and, swinging him to and fro, will beat him with staves till the blood runs from his ears. What I have said in respect to the case is true as these men here can testify—even to the five hundred rupees."

I said: "Was it five hundred?" And Kirpa Ram, the *jat* said: "Five hundred; for I bore witness also."

And I groaned, for it had been in my heart to have said two hundred only.

Then a new fear came upon me and my bowels turned to water, and, running swiftly to the house of Ram Dass, I sought for my books and my money in the great wooden chest under my bedstead. There remained nothing; not even a cowrie's value. All had been taken by the devil

who said he was my brother. I went to my own house also and opened the boards of the shutters; but there also was nothing save the rats among the grain-baskets. In that hour my senses left me, and, tearing my clothes, I ran to the well-place, crying out for the justice of the English on my brother Ram Dass, and, in my madness, telling all that the books were lost. When men saw that I would have jumped down the well, they believed the truth of my talk; more especially because upon my back and bosom were still the marks of the staves of the landholder.

Jowar Singh the carpenter withstood me, and turning me in his hands—for he is a very strong man—showed the scars upon my body, and bowed down with laughter upon the well-curb. He cried aloud so that all heard him, from the well-square to the caravansary of the pilgrims: "Oho! The jackals have quarreled, and the gray one has been caught in the trap. In truth, this man has been grievously beaten, and his brother has taken the money which the court decreed! Oh, *bunnia*, this shall be told for years against you! The jackals have quarreled, and, moreover, the books are burned. Oh, people indebted to Durga Dass—and I know that ye be many—the books are burned!"

Then all Isser Jang took up the cry that the books were burned. *Ahi! Ahi!* that in my folly I had let that escape my mouth—and they laughed throughout the city. They gave me the abuse of the Punjabi, which is a terrible abuse and very *tez;* pelting me also with sticks and cow-dung till I fell down and cried for mercy.

Ram Narain, the letter-writer, bade the people cease, for fear that the news should get into Montgomery, and the policemen might come down to inquire. He said, using many bad words: "This much mercy will I do to you, Durga Dass, though there was no mercy in your dealings with my sister's son over the matter of the dun heifer. Has any man a pony on which he sets no store, that this fellow may escape? If the landholder hears that one of the twain (and God knows whether he beat one or both, but this man is certainly beaten)

be in the city, there will be a murder done, and then will come the police, making inquisition into each man's house and eating the sweet-seller's stuff all day long."

Kirpa Ram, the *jat*, said: "I have a pony very sick. But with beating he can be made to walk for two miles. If he dies, the hide-sellers will have the body."

Then Chumbo, the hide-seller, said: "I will pay three annas for the body, and will walk by this man's side till such time as the pony dies. If it be more than two miles, I will pay two annas only."

Kirpa Ram said: "Be it so." Men brought out the pony, and I asked leave to draw a little water from the well, because I was dried up with fear.

Then Ram Narain said: "Here be four annas. God has brought you very low, Durga Dass, and I would not send you away empty, even though the matter of my sister's son's dun heifer be an open sore between us. It is a long way to your own country. Go, and if it be so willed, live; but, above all, do not take the pony's bridle, for that is mine."

And I went out of Isser Jang, amid the laughing of the huge-thighed jats, and the hide-seller walked by my side waiting for the pony to fall dead. In one mile it died, and being full of fear of the landholder, I ran till I could run no more and came to this place.

But I swear by the Cow, I swear by all things whereon Hindoos and Mussulmans, and even the sahibs swear, that I, and not my brother, was beaten by the landholder. But the case is shut and the doors of the law courts are shut, and God knows where the *baba* Stunt Sahib—the mother's milk is not dry upon his hairless lip—is gone. *Ahi! Ahi!* I have no witnesses, and the scars will heal, and I am a poor man. But, on my father's soul, on the oath of a Mahajun from Pali, I, and not my brother, was beaten by the landholder!

What can I do? The justice of the English is as a great river. Having gone forward, it does not return. Howbeit,

do you, sahib, take a pen and write clearly what I have said, that the Dipty Sahib may see, and reprove the Stunt Sahib, who is a colt yet unlicked by the mare, so young is he. I, and not my brother, was beaten, and he is gone to the west —I do not know where.

But, above all things, write—so that sahibs may read, and his disgrace be accomplished—that Ram Dass, my brother, son of Purun Dass, Mahajun of Pali, is a swine and a night-thief, a taker of life, an eaten of flesh, a jackals-pawn, without beauty, or faith, or cleanliness, or honor!

AT TWENTY-TWO

Narrow as the womb, deep as the Pit, and dark as the heart of a man.—*Sonthal Miner's Proverb*

"A WEAVER went out to reap but stayed to unravel the cornstalks. Ha! ha! ha! Is there any sense in a weaver?"

The never-ending tussel had recommenced. Janki Meah glared at Kundoo, but, as Janki Meah was blind, Kundoo was not impressed. He had come to argue with Janki Meah, and, if chance favored, to make love to the old man's beautiful young wife.

This was Kundoo's grievance, and he spoke in the name of all the five men who, with Janki Meah, composed the gang in No. 7 gallery of Twenty-two. Janki Meah had been blind for the thirty years during which he had served the Jimahari Colleries with pick and crowbar. All through these thirty years he had regularly, every morning before going down, drawn from the overseer his allowance of lamp-oil—just as if he had been an eyed miner. What Kundoo's gang resented, as hundreds of gangs had resented before, was Janki Meah's selfishness. He would not add the oil to the common stock of his gang, but would save and sell it.

"I knew these workings before you were born," Janki

Meah used to reply; "I don't want the light to get my coal out by, and I am not going to help you. The oil is mine, and I intend to keep it."

A strange man in many ways was Janki Meah, the white-haired, hot-tempered, sightless weaver who had turned pit-man. All day long—except on Sundays and Mondays, when he was usually drunk—he worked in the Twenty-two shaft of the Jimahari Colliery as cleverly as a man with all the senses. At evening he went up in the great steam-hauled cage to the pit-bank, and there called for his pony—a rusty, coal-dusty beast, nearly as old as Janki Meah. The pony would come to his side, and Janki Meah would clamber on to its back and be taken at once to the plot of land which he, like the other miners, received from the Jimahari company. The pony knew that place, and when, after six years, the company changed all the allotments, to prevent the miners acquiring proprietary rights, Janki Meah represented, with tears in his eyes, that were his holding shifted he would never be able to find his way to the new one. "My horse only knows that place," pleaded Janki Meah, and so he was allowed to keep his land.

On the strength of this concession and his accumulated oil-savings, Janki Meah took a second wife—a girl of the Jolaha main stock of the Meahs, and singularly beautiful. Janki Meah could not see her beauty; wherefore he took her on trust, and forbade her to go down the pit. He had not worked for thirty years in the dark without knowing that the pit was no place for pretty women. He loaded her with ornaments—not brass or pewter, but real silver ones—and she rewarded him by flirting outrageously with Kundoo of No. 7 gallery gang. Kundoo was really the gang head, but Janki Meah insisted upon all the work being entered in his own name, and chose the men that he worked with. Custom—stronger even than the Jimahari company—dictated that Janki, by right of his years, should manage these things, and should also work despite his blindness. In Indian mines, where they cut into the solid coal with the pick and clear it

out from floor to ceiling, he could come to no great harm. At home, where they undercut the coal and bring it down in crashing avalanches from the roof, he would never have been allowed to set foot in a pit. He was not a popular man, because of his oil-savings; but all the gangs admitted that Janki knew all the *khads*, or workings, that had ever been sunk or worked since the Jimahari company first started operations on the Tarachunda fields.

Pretty little Unda only knew that her old husband was a fool who could be managed. She took no interest in the collieries except in so far as they swallowed up Kundoo five days out of the seven, and covered him with coal-dust. Kundoo was a great workman, and did his best not to get drunk, because, when he had saved forty rupees, Unda was to steal everything that she could find in Janki's house and run with Kundoo "over the hills and far away" to countries where there were no mines, and every one kept three fat bullocks and a milch-buffalo. While this scheme was maturing it was his amiable custom to drop in upon Janki and worry him about the oil-savings. Unda sat in a corner and nodded approval. On the night when Kundoo had quoted that objectionable proverb about weavers, Janki grew angry.

"Listen, you pig," said he, "blind I am, and old I am, but, before ever you were born, I was gray among the coal. Even in the days when the Twenty-two *khad* was unsunk and there were not two thousand men here, I was known to have all knowledge of the pits. What *khad* is there that I do not know, from the bottom of the shaft to the end of the last drive? Is it the Baromba *khad*, the oldest, or the Twenty-two where Tibu's gallery runs up to Number 5?"

"Hear the old fool talk!" said Kundoo, nodding to Unda. "No gallery of Twenty-two will cut into five before the end of the rains. We have a month's solid coal before us. The Babuji says so."

"Babuji! Pigji! Dogji! What do these fat slugs from Calcutta know? He draws and draws and draws, and talks and talks and talks, and his maps are all wrong. I, Janki,

know that this is so. When a man has been shut up in the dark for thirty years, God gives him knowledge. The old gallery that Tibu's gang made is not six feet from Number 5."

"Without doubt God gives the blind knowledge," said Kundoo, with a look at Unda. "Let it be as you say. I, for my part, do not know where lies the gallery of Tibu's gang, but I am not a withered monkey who needs oil to grease his joints with."

Kundoo swung out of the hut laughing, and Unda giggled. Janki turned his sightless eyes toward his wife and swore. "I have land, and I have sold a great deal of lamp-oil," mused Janki; "but I was a fool to marry this child."

A week later the rains set in with a vengeance, and the gangs paddled about in coal-slush at the pit-banks. Then the big mine-pumps were made ready, and the manager of the colliery plowed through the wet toward the Tarachunda River swelling between its soppy banks. "Lord, send that this beastly beck doesn't misbehave," said the manager, piously, and he went and took counsel with his assistant about the pumps.

But the Tarachunda misbehaved very much indeed. After a fall of three inches of rain in an hour it was obliged to do something. It topped its bank and joined the flood-water that was hemmed between two low hills just where the embankment of the colliery main line crossed. When a good part of a rain-fed river, and a few acres of flood-water, make a dead set for a nine-foot culvert, the culvert may spout its finest, but the water cannot all get out. The manager pranced upon one leg with excitement, and his language was improper.

He had reason to swear, because he knew that one inch of water on land meant a pressure of one hundred tons to the acre; and here were about five feet of water forming, behind the railway embankment, over the shallower workings of Twenty-two. You must understand that, in a coal-mine, the coal nearest the surface is worked first from the

central shaft. This is to say, the miners may clear out the stuff to within ten, twenty, or thirty feet of the surface, and, when all is worked out, leave only a skin of earth upheld by some few pillars of coal. In a deep mine where they know that they have any amount of material at hand, men prefer to get all their mineral out at one shaft, rather than make a number of little holes to tap the comparatively unimportant surface coal.

And the manager watched the flood.

The culvert spouted a nine-foot gush; but the water still formed, and word was sent to clear the men out of Twenty-two. The cages came up crammed and crammed again with the men nearest the pit-eye, as they call the place where you can see daylight from the bottom of the main shaft. All away and away, up the long black galleries the flare-lamps were winking and dancing like so many fire-flies, and the men and the women waited for the clanking, rattling, thundering cages to come down and fly up again. But the out-workings were very far off, and the word could not be passed quickly, though the heads of the gangs and the assistant shouted and swore and tramped and stumbled. The manager kept one eye on the great troubled pool behind the embankment, and prayed that the culvert would give way and let the water through in time. With the other eye he watched the cages come up and saw the headmen counting the roll of the gangs. With all his heart and soul he swore at the winder who controlled the iron drum that wound up the wire rope on which hung the cages.

In a little time there was a down-draw in the water behind the embankment—a sucking whirlpool, all yellow and yeasty. The water had smashed through the skin of the earth and was pouring into the old shallow workings of Twenty-two.

Deep down below, a rush of black water caught the last gang waiting for the cage, and as they clambered in, the whirl was about their waists. The cage reached the pit-bank, and the manager called the roll. The gangs were all

safe except Gang Janki, Gang Mogul, and Gang Rahim, eighteen men, with perhaps ten basket-women who loaded the coal into the little iron carriages that ran on the tramways of the main galleries. These gangs were in the outworkings, three-quarters of a mile away, on the extreme fringe of the mine. Once more the cage went down, but with only two Englishmen in it, and dropped into a swirling, roaring current that had almost touched the roof of some of the lower side-galleries. One of the wooden balks with which they had propped the old workings shot past on the current, just missing the cage.

"If we don't want our ribs knocked out, we'd better go," said the manager. "We can't even save the company's props."

The cage drew out of the water with a splash, and a few minutes later, it was officially reported that there were at least ten feet of water in the pit's-eye. Now ten feet of water there meant that all other places in the mine were flooded except such galleries as were more than ten feet above the level of the bottom of the shaft. The deep workings would be full, the main galleries would be full, but in the high workings reached by inclines from the main roads, there would be a certain amount of air cut off, so to speak, by the water and squeezed up by it. The little science-primers explain how water behaves when you pour it down test-tubes. The flooding of Twenty-two was an illustration on a large scale.

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"By the Holy Grove, what has happened to the air?" It was a Sonthal gangman of Gang Mogul in No. 9 gallery, and he was driving a six-foot way through the coal. Then there was a rush from the other galleries, and Gang Janki and Gang Rahim stumbled up with their basket-women.

"Water has come in the mine," they said, "and there is no way of getting out."

"I went down," said Janki—"down the slope of my gallery, and I felt the water."

"There has been no water in the cutting in our time," clamored the women. "Why cannot we go away?"

"Be silent," said Janki; "long ago, when my father was here, water came to Ten—no, Eleven—cutting, and there was great trouble. Let us get away to where the air is better."

The three gangs and the basket-women left No. 9 gallery and went further up No. 16. At one turn of the road they could see the pitchy black water lapping on the coal. It had touched the roof of a gallery that they knew well—a gallery where they used to smoke their *huqas* and conduct their flirtations. Seeing this, they called aloud upon their gods, and the Meahs, who are thrice bastard Mohammedans, strove to recollect the name of the Prophet. They came to a great open square whence nearly all the coal had been extracted. It was the end of the out-workings, and the end of the mine.

Far away down the gallery a small pumping-engine, used for keeping dry a deep working and fed with steam from above, was faithfully throbbing. They heard it cease.

"They have cut off the steam," said Kundoo, hopefully. "They have given the order to use all the steam for the pit-bank pumps. They will clear out the water."

"If the water has reached the smoking-gallery," said Janki, "all the company's pumps can do nothing for three days."

"It is very hot," moaned Jasoda, the Meah basket-woman. "There is a very bad air here because of the lamps."

"Put them out," said Janki; "why do you want lamps?" The lamps were put out amid protests, and the company sat still in the utter dark. Somebody rose quietly and began walking over the coals. It was Janki, who was touching the walls with his hands. "Where is the ledge?" he murmured to himself.

"Sit, sit!" said Kundoo. "If we die, we die. The air is very bad."

But Janki still stumbled and crept and tapped with his pick upon the walls. The women rose to their feet.

"Stay all where you are. Without the lamps you cannot see, and I—I am always seeing," said Janki. Then he paused, and called out: "Oh, you who have been in the cutting more than ten years, what is the name of this open place? I am an old man and I have forgotten."

"Bullia's Room," answered the Sonthal who had complained of the vileness of the air.

"Again," said Janki.

"Bullia's Room."

"Then I have found it," said Janki. "The name only had slipped my memory. Tibu's gang's gallery is here."

"A lie," said Kundoo. "There have been no galleries in this place since my day."

"Three paces was the depth of the ledge," muttered Janki without heeding—"and—oh, my poor bones!—I have found it! It is here, up this ledge. Come all you, one by one, to the place of my voice, and I will count you."

There was a rush in the dark, and Janki felt the first man's face hit his knees as the Sonthal scrambled up the ledge.

"Who?" cried Janki.

"I, Sunua Manji."

"Sit you down," said Janki. "Who next?"

One by one the women and the men crawled up the ledge which ran along one side of "Bullia's Room." Degraded Mohammedan, pig-eating Musahr and wild Sonthal, Janki ran his hand over them all.

"Now follow after," said he, "catching hold of my heel, and the women catching the men's clothes." He did not ask whether the men had brought their picks with them. A miner, black or white, does not drop his pick. One by one, Janki leading, they crept into the old gallery—a six-foot way with a scant four feet from thill to roof.

"The air is better here," said Jasoda. They could hear her heart beating in thick, sick bumps.

"Slowly, slowly," said Janki. "I am an old man, and I forget many things. This is Tibu's gallery, but where are the four bricks where they used to put their *huqa* fire on when the sahibs never saw? Slowly, slowly, oh, you people behind."

They heard his hands disturbing the small coal on the floor of the gallery and then a dull sound. "This is one unbaked brick, and this is another and another. Kundoo is a young man—let him come forward. Put a knee upon this brick and strike here. When Tibu's gang were at dinner on the last day before the good coal ended, they heard the men of Five on the other side, and Five worked their gallery two Sundays later—or it may have been one. Strike there, Kundoo, but give me room to go back."

Kundoo, doubting, drove the pick, but the first soft crush of the coal was a call to him. He was fighting for his life and for Unda—pretty little Unda with rings on all her toes —for Unda and the forty rupees. The woman sung the "Song of the Pick"—the terrible, slow, swinging melody with the muttered chorus that repeats the sliding of the loosened coal, and, to each cadence, Kundoo smote in the black dark. When he could do no more, Sunua Manji took the pick, and struck for his life and his wife, and his village beyond the blue hills over the Tarachunda River. An hour the men worked, and then the women cleared away the coal.

"It is further than I thought," said Janki. "The air is very bad; but strike, Kundoo, strike hard."

For the fifth time Kundoo took up the pick as the Sonthal crawled back. The song had scarcely recommenced when it was broken by a yell from Kundoo that echoed down the gallery: "*Par hua! Par hua!* We are through, we are through!" The imprisoned air in the mine shot through the opening, and the women at the far end of the gallery heard the water rush through the pillars of "Bullia's Room" and roar against the ledge. Having fulfilled the law under which it worked, it rose no further. The women screamed

and pressed forward. "The water has come—we shall be killed! Let us go."

Kundoo crawled through the gap and found himself in a propped gallery by the simple process of hitting his head against a beam.

"Do I know the pits or do I not?" chuckled Janki. "This is the Number Five; go you out slowly, giving me your names. Ho! Rahim, count your gang! Now let us go forward, each catching hold of the other as before."

They formed a line in the darkness and Janki led them—for a pitman in a strange pit is only one degree less liable to err than an ordinary mortal underground for the first time. At last they saw a flare-lamp, and Gangs Janki, Mogul and Rahim of Twenty-two stumbled dazed into the glare of the draught-furnace at the bottom of Five: Janki feeling his way and the rest behind.

"Water has come into Twenty-two. God knows where are the others. I have brought these men from Tibu's gallery in our cutting; making connection through the north side of the gallery. Take us to the cage," said Janki Meah.

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At the pit-bank of Twenty-two, some thousand people clamored and wept and shouted. One hundred men—one thousand men—had been drowned in the cutting. They would all go to their homes to-morrow. Where were their men? Little Unda, her scarf drenched with the rain, stood at the pit-mouth calling down the shaft for Kundoo. They had swung the cages clear of the mouth, and her only answer was the murmur of the flood in the pit's-eye two hundred and sixty feet below.

"Look after that woman! She'll chuck herself down the shaft in a minute," shouted the manager.

But he need not have troubled; Unda was afraid of death. She wanted Kundoo. The assistant was watching the flood and seeing how far he could wade into it. There was a lull in the water, and the whirlpool had slackened. The mine was full, and the people at the pit-bank howled.

"My faith, we shall be lucky if we have five hundred hands in the place to-morrow!" said the manager. "There's some chance yet of running a temporary dam across that water. Shove in anything—tubs and bullock-carts if you haven't enough bricks. Make them work now if they never worked before. Hi! you gangers, make them work."

Little by little the crowd was broken into detachments, and pushed toward the water with promises of overtime. The dam-making began, and when it was fairly under way, the manager thought that the hour had come for the pumps. There was no fresh inrush into the mine. The tall, red, iron-clamped pump-beam rose and fell, and the pumps snored and guttered and shrieked as the first water poured out of the pipe.

"We must run her all to-night," said the manager, wearily, "but there's no hope for the poor devils down below. Look here, Gur Sahai, if you are proud of your engines, show me what they can do now."

Gur Sahai grinned and nodded, with his right hand upon the lever and an oil-can in his left. He could do no more than he was doing, but he could keep that up till the dawn. Were the company's pumps to be beaten by the vagaries of that troublesome Tarachunda River? Never, never! And the pumps sobbed and panted: "Never, never!" The manager sat in the shelter of the pit-bank roofing, trying to dry himself by the pump-boiler fire, and, in the dreary dusk, he saw the crowds on the dam scatter and fly.

"That's the end," he groaned. " 'Twill take us six weeks to persuade 'em that we haven't tried to drown their mates on purpose. Oh, for a decent, rational Geordie!"

But the flight had no panic in it. Men had run over from Five with astounding news, and the foremen could not hold their gangs together. Presently, surrounded by a clamorous crew, Gangs Rahim, Mogul, and Janki, and ten basket-women, walked up to report themselves, and pretty little Unda stole away to Janki's hut to prepare his evening meal.

"Alone I found the way," explained Janki Meah, "and now will the company give me pension?"

The simple pit folk shouted and leaped and went back to the dam, reassured in their old belief that, whatever happened, so great was the power of the company whose salt they eat, none of them could be killed. But Gur Sahai only bared his white teeth and kept his hand upon the lever and proved his pumps to the uttermost.

. . . . . .

"I say," said the assistant to the manager, a week later, "do you recollect 'Germinal'?"

"Yes. Queer thing. I thought of it in the cage when that balk went by. Why?"

"Oh, this business seems to be 'Germinal' upside down. Janki was in my veranda all this morning, telling me that Kundoo had eloped with his wife—Unda or Anda, I think her name was."

"Halloo! And those were the cattle that you risked your life to clear out of Twenty-two!"

"No—I was thinking of the company's props, not the company's men."

"Sounds better to say so now; but I don't believe you, old fellow."

IN FLOOD TIME

Tweed said tae Till:
"What gars ye rin sae still?"
Till said tae Tweed:
"Though ye rin wi' speed
An' I rin slaw—
Yet where ye droon ae man
I droon twa."

THERE is no getting over the river to-night, sahib. They say that a bullock-cart has been washed down already, and the *ekka* that went over half an hour before you came has

not yet reached the far side. Is the sahib in haste? I will drive the ford-elephant in to show him. *Ohe*, *mahout* there in the shed! Bring out Ram Pershad, and if he will face the current, good. An elephant never lies, sahib, and Ram Pershad is separated from his friend Kala Nag. He, too, wishes to cross to the far side. Well done! Well done! my king! Go half way across, *mahoutji*, and see what the river says. Well done, Ram Pershad! Pearl among elephants, go into the river! Hit him on the head, fool! Was the goad made only to scratch thy own fat back with, bastard? Strike! Strike! What are the bowlders to thee, Ram Pershad, my Rustum, my mountain of strength? Go in! Go in!

No, sahib! It is useless. You can hear him trumpet. He is telling Kala Nag that he cannot come over. See! He has swung round and is shaking his head. He is no fool. He knows what the Barhwi means when it is angry. Aha! Indeed, thou art no fool, my child! Salam, Ram Pershad, Bahadur! Take him under the trees, *mahout*, and see that he gets his spices. Well done, thou chiefest among tuskers. Salam to the sirkar and go to sleep.

What is to be done? The sahib must wait till the river goes down. It will shrink to-morrow morning, if God pleases, or the day after at the latest. Now why does the sahib get so angry? I am his servant. Before God, I did not create this stream! What can I do? My hut and all that is therein is at the service of the sahib, and it is beginning to rain. Come away, my lord. How will the river go down for your throwing abuse at it? In the old days the English people were not thus. The fire-carriage has made them soft. In the old days, when they drove behind horses by day or by night, they said naught if a river barred the way or a carriage sat down in the mud. It was the will of God—not like a fire-carriage which goes and goes and goes, and would go though all the devils in the land hung on to its tail. The fire-carriage hath spoiled the English people. After all, what is a day lost, or, for that matter, what are

two days? Is the sahib going to his own wedding, that he is so mad with haste? Ho! Ho! Ho! I am an old man and see few sahibs. Forgive me if I have forgotten the respect that is due to them. The sahib is not angry?

His own wedding! Ho! Ho! Ho! The mind of an old man is like the numah-tree. Fruit, bud, blossom, and the dead leaves of all the years of the past flourish together. Old and new and that which is gone out of remembrance, all three are there! Sit on the bedstead, sahib, and drink milk. Or—would the sahib in truth care to drink my tobacco? It is good. It is the tobacco of Nuklao. My son, who is in service there, sent it to me. Drink, then, sahib, if you know how to handle the tube. The sahib takes it like a Mussulman. Wah! Wah! Where did he learn that? His own wedding! Ho! Ho! Ho! The sahib says that there is no wedding in the matter at all? Now is it likely that the sahib would speak true talk to me who am only a black man? Small wonder, then, that he is in haste. Thirty years have I beaten the gong at this ford, but never have I seen a sahib in such haste. Thirty years, sahib! That is a very long time. Thirty years ago this ford was on the track of the *bunjaras*, and I have seen two thousand pack-bullocks cross in one night. Now the rail has come, and the fire-carriage says "buzz-buzz-buzz," and a hundred lakhs of maunds slide across that big bridge. It is very wonderful; but the ford is lonely now that there are no *bunjaras* to camp under the trees.

Nay, do not trouble to look at the sky without. It will rain till the dawn. Listen! The bowlders are talking tonight in the bed of the river. Hear them! They would be husking your bones, sahib, had you tried to cross. See, I will shut the door and no rain can enter. *Wahi! Ahi! Ugh!* Thirty years on the banks of the ford! An old man am I and—where is the oil for the lamp?

. . . . . .

Your pardon, but, because of my years, I sleep no sounder than a dog; and you moved to the door. Look then, sahib.

Look and listen. A full half *kos* from bank to bank is the stream now—you can see it under the stars—and there are ten feet of water therein. It will not shrink because of the anger in your eyes, and it will not be quiet on account of your curses. Which is louder, sahib—your voice or the voice of the river? Call to it—perhaps it will be ashamed. Lie down and sleep afresh, sahib. I know the anger of the Barhwi when there has fallen rain in the foothills. I swam the flood once, on a night tenfold worse than this, and by the favor of God I was released from death when I had come to the very gates thereof.

May I tell the tale? Very good talk. I will fill the pipe anew.

Thirty years ago it was, when I was a young man and had but newly come to the ford. I was strong then, and the *bunjaras* had no doubt when I said "this ford is clear." I have toiled all night up to my shoulder-blades in running water amid a hundred bullocks mad with fear, and have brought them across losing not a hoof. When all was done I fetched the shivering men, and they gave me for reward the pick of their cattle—the bell-bullock of the drove. So great was the honor in which I was held! But to-day when the rain falls and the river rises I creep into my hut and whimper like a dog. The strength is gone from me. I am an old man and the fire-carriage has made the ford desolate. They were wont to call me the Strong One of the Barhwi.

Behold my face, sahib. It is the face of a monkey. And my arm. It is the arm of an old woman. I swear to you, sahib, that a woman has loved this face and has rested in the hollow of this arm. Twenty years ago, sahib. Believe me, this was true talk—twenty years ago.

Come to the door and look across. Can you see a thin fire very far away down the stream? That is the temple-fire, in the shrine of Hanuman, of the village of Pateera. North, under the big star, is the village itself, but it is hidden by a bend of the river. Is that far to swim, sahib? Would you take off your clothes and adventure? Yet I

swam to Pateera—not once but many times; and there are *muggers* in the river too.

Love knows no caste; else why should I, a Mussulman and the son of a Mussulman, have sought a Hindoo woman —a widow of the Hindoos—the sister of the headman of Pateera? But it was even so. They of the headman's household came on a pilgrimage to Muttra when she was but newly a bride. Silver tires were upon the wheels of the bullock-cart, and silken curtains hid the woman. Sahib, I made no haste in their conveyance, for the wind parted the curtains and I saw her. When they returned from pilgrimage the boy that was her husband had died, and I saw her again in the bullock-cart. By God, these Hindoos are fools! What was it to me whether she was Hindoo or Jain—scavenger, leper or whole? I would have married her and made her a home by the ford. The seventh of the nine bars says that a man may not marry one of the idolaters. Is that truth? Both Shiahs and Sunnis say that a Mussulman may not marry one of the idolaters? Is the sahib a priest, then, that he knows so much? I will tell him something that he does not know. There is neither Shiah nor Sunni, forbidden nor idolater, in love; and the nine bars are but nine little fagots that the flame of love utterly burns away. In truth, I would have taken her; but what could I do? The headman would have sent his men to break my head with staves. I am not—I was not—afraid of any five men; but against half a village who can prevail?

Therefore it was my custom, these things having been arranged between us twain, to go by night to the village of Pateera, and there we met among the crops; no man knowing aught of the matter. Behold, now! I was wont to cross here, skirting the jungle to the river bend where the railway bridge is, and thence across the elbow of land to Pateera. The light of the shrine was my guide when the nights were dark. That jungle near the river is very full of snakes—little *karaits* that sleep on the sand—and moreover, her brothers would have slain me had they found me in the

crops. But none knew—none knew save she and I; and the blown sand of the river-bed covered the track of my feet. In the hot months it was an easy thing to pass from the ford to Pateera, and in the first rains, when the river rose slowly, it was an easy thing also. I set the strength of my body against the strength of the stream, and nightly I eat in my hut here and drank at Pateera yonder. She had said that one Hirnam Singh, a scamp, had sought her, and he was of a village up the river, but on the same bank. All Sikhs are dogs, and they have refused in their folly that good gift of God—tobacco. I was ready to destroy Hirnam Singh that ever he had come nigh her; and the more because he had sworn to her that she had a lover, and that he would lie in wait and give the name to the headman unless she went away with him. What curs are these Sikhs!

After that news I swam always with a little sharp knife in my belt, and evil would it have been for a man had he stayed me. I knew not the face of Hirnam Singh, but I would have killed any who came between me and her.

Upon a night in the beginning of the rains I was minded to go across to Pateera, albeit the river was angry. Now the nature of the Barhwi is this, sahib. In twenty breaths it comes down from the hills, a wall three feet high, and I have seen it, between the lighting of a fire and the cooking of a flapjack, grow from the runnel to a sister of the Jumna.

When I left this bank there was a shoal a half-mile down, and I made shift to fetch it and draw breath there ere going forward; for I felt the hands of the river heavy upon my heels. Yet what will a young man not do for Love's sake? There was but little light from the stars, and midway to the shoal a branch of the stinking deodar-tree brushed my mouth as I swam. That was a sign of heavy rain in the foothills and beyond, for the deodar is a strong tree, not easily shaken from the hillsides. I made haste, the river aiding me, but ere I had touched the shoal, the pulse of the stream beat, as it were, within me and around, and, behold, the shoal was

gone and I rode high on the crest of a wave that ran from bank to bank. Has the sahib ever been cast into much water that fights and will not let a man use his limbs? To me, my head up on the water, it seemed as though there were naught but water to the world's end, and the river drove me with its driftwood. A man is a very little thing in the belly of a flood. And this flood, though I knew it not, was the Great Flood about which men talk still. My liver was dissolved and I lay like a log upon my back in the fear of death. There were living things in the water, crying and howling grievously—beasts of the forest and cattle, and once the voice of a man asking for help. But the rain came and lashed the water white, and I heard no more save the roar of the bowlders below and the roar of the rain above. Thus I was whirled down-stream, wrestling for the breath in me. It is very hard to die when one is young. Can the sahib, standing here, see the railway bridge? Look, there are the lights of the mail-train going to Peshawur! The bridge is now twenty feet above the river, but upon that night the water was roaring against the lattice-work and against the lattice came I feet first. But much driftwood was piled there and upon the piers, and I took no great hurt. Only the river pressed me as a strong man presses a weaker. Scarcely could I take hold of the lattice-work and crawl to the upper boom. Sahib, the water was foaming across the rails a foot deep! Judge therefore what manner of flood it must have been. I could not hear. I could not see. I could but lie on the boom and pant for breath.

After a while the rain ceased and there came out in the sky certain new washed stars, and by their light I saw that there was no end to the black water as far as the eye could travel, and the water had risen upon the rails. There were dead beasts in the driftwood on the piers, and others caught by the neck in the lattice-work, and others not yet drowned who strove to find a foothold on the lattice-work—buffaloes and kine, and wild pig, and deer one or two, and snakes and jackals past all counting. Their bodies were black upon the

left side of the bridge, but the smaller of them were forced through the lattice-work and whirled down-stream.

Thereafter the stars died and the rain came down afresh and the river rose yet more, and I felt the bridge begin to stir under me as a man stirs in his sleep ere he wakes. But I was not afraid, sahib. I swear to you that I was not afraid, though I had no power in my limbs. I knew that I should not die till I had seen her once more. But I was very cold, and I felt that the bridge must go.

There was a trembling in the water, such a trembling as goes before the coming of a great wave, and the bridge lifted its flank to the rush of that coming so that the right lattice dipped under water and the left rose clear. On my beard, sahib, I am speaking God's truth! As a mirzapore stone-boat careens to the wind, so the Barhwi Bridge turned. Just thus and in no other manner.

I slid from the boom into deep water, and behind me came the wave of wrath of the river. I heard its voice and the scream of the middle part of the bridge as it moved from the piers and sunk, and I knew no more till I rose in the middle of the great flood. I put forth my hand to swim, and lo! it fell upon the knotted hair of the head of a man. He was dead, for no one but I, the Strong One of Barhwi, could have lived in that race. He had been dead full two days, for he rode high, wallowing, and was an aid to me. I laughed then, knowing for a surety that I should yet see her and take no harm; and I twisted my fingers in the hair of the man, for I was far spent, and together we went down the stream—he the dead and I the living. Lacking that help I should have sunk; the cold was in my marrow, and my flesh was ribbed and sodden on my bones. But he had no fear who had known the uttermost of the power of the river; and I let him go where he chose. At last we came into the power of a side-current that set to the right bank, and I strove with my feet to draw with it. But the dead man swung heavily in the whirl, and I feared that some branch had struck him and that he would sink. The tops of

the tamarisk brushed my knees, so I knew we were come into flood-water above the crops, and, after, I let down my legs and felt bottom—the ridge of a field—and, after, the dead man stayed upon a knoll under a fig-tree, and I drew my body from the water rejoicing.

Does the sahib know whither the back-wash of the flood had borne me? To the knoll which is the eastern boundary mark of the village of Pateera! No other place. I drew the dead man up on the grass for the service that he had done me, and also because I knew not whether I should need him again. Then I went, crying thrice like a jackal, to the appointed place which was near the byre of the herdman's house. But my love was already there, weeping upon her knees. She feared that the flood had swept my hut at the Barhwi Ford. When I came softly through the ankle-deep water, she thought it was a ghost and would have fled, but I put my arms around her, and . . . I was no ghost in those days, though I am an old man now. Ho! Ho! Dried corn, in truth. Maize without juice. Ho! Ho! *

I told her the story of the breaking of the Barhwi Bridge, and she said that I was greater than mortal man, for none may cross the Barhwi in full flood, and I had seen what never man had seen before. Hand in hand we went to the knoll where the dead lay, and I showed her by what help I had made the ford. She looked also upon the body under the stars, for the latter end of the night was clear, and hid her face in her hands, crying: "It is the body of Hirnam Singh!" I said: "The swine is of more use dead than living, my beloved," and she said: "Surely, for he has saved the dearest life in the world to my love. None the less, he can not stay here, for that would bring shame upon me." The body was not a gunshot from her door.

Then said I, rolling the body with my hands: "God hath judged between us, Hirnam Singh, that thy blood might not

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* I grieve to say that the Warden of the Barhwi Ford is responsible here for two very bad puns in the vernacular.—R. K.

be upon my head. Now, whether I have done thee a wrong in keeping thee from the burning-ghat, do thou and the crows settle together." So I cast him adrift into the flood-water, and he was drawn out to the open, ever wagging his thick black beard like a priest under the pulpit-board. And I saw no more of Hirnam Singh.

Before the breaking of the day we two parted, and I moved toward such of the jungle as was not flooded. With the full light I saw what I had done in the darkness, and the bones of my body were loosened in my flesh, for there ran two *kos* of raging water between the village of Pateera and the trees of the far bank, and, in the middle, the piers of the Barhwi Bridge showed like broken teeth in the jaw of an old man. Nor was there any life upon the waters—neither birds nor boats, but only an army of drowned things—bullocks and horses and men—and the river was redder than blood from the clay of the foothills. Never had I seen such a flood—never since that year have I seen the like—and, oh, sahib, no man living had done what I had done. There was no return for me that day. Not for all the lands of the headman would I venture a second time without the shield of darkness that cloaks danger. I went a *kos* up the river to the house of a blacksmith, saying that the flood had swept me from my hut, and they gave me food. Seven days I stayed with the blacksmith, till a boat came and I returned to my house. There was no trace of wall, or roof, or floor—naught but a patch of slimy mud. Judge, therefore, sahib, how far the river must have risen. It was written that I should not die either in my house, or in the heart of the Barhwi, or under the wreck of the Barhwi Bridge, for God sent down Hirnam Singh two days dead, though I know not how the man died, to be my buoy and support. Hirnam Singh had been in hell these twenty years, and the thought of that night must be the flower of his torment.

Listen, sahib! The river has changed its voice. It is going to sleep before the dawn, to which there is yet one hour. With the light it will come down afresh. How do I

know? Have I been here thirty years without knowing the voice of the river as a father knows the voice of his son? Every moment it is talking less angrily. I swear that there will be no danger for one hour or, perhaps, two. I cannot answer for the morning. Be quick, sahib! I will call Ram Pershad, and he will not turn back this time. Is the 'paulin tightly corded upon all the baggage? *Ohe, mahout* with a mud head, the elephant for the sahib, and tell them on the far side that there will be no crossing after daylight.

Money? Nay, sahib. I am not of that kind. No, not even to give sweetmeats to the baby-folk. My house, look you, is empty, and I am an old man.

Dutt, Ram Pershad! *Dutt! Dutt! Dutt!* Good luck go with you, sahib.

THE SENDING OF DANA DA

When the devil rides on your chest remember the *chamar*.
—*Native Proverb*

Once upon a time, some people in India made a new heaven and a new earth out of broken teacups, a missing brooch or two, and a hair-brush. These were hidden under bushes, or stuffed into holes in the hillside, and an entire civil service of subordinate gods used to find or mend them again; and every one said: "There are more things in heaven and earth than are dreamed of in our philosophy." Several other things happened also, but the religion never seemed to get much beyond its first manifestations; though it added an air-line postal *dak*, and orchestral effects in order to keep abreast of the times, and stall off competition.

This religion was too elastic for ordinary use. It stretched itself and embraced pieces of everything that medicine-men of all ages have manufactured. It approved of and stole from Freemasonry; looted the Latter-day Rosicrucians of half their pet words; took any fragments of Egyptian phi-

losophy that it found in the Encyclopædia Britannica; annexed as many of the Vedas as had been translated into French or English, and talked of all the rest; built in the German versions of what is left of the Zend Avesta; encouraged white, gray and black magic, including Spiritualism, palmistry, fortune-telling by cards, hot chestnuts, double-kerneled nuts and tallow droppings; would have adopted Voodoo and Oboe had it known anything about them, and showed itself, in every way, one of the most accommodating arrangements that had ever been invented since the birth of the sea.

When it was in thorough working order, with all the machinery down to the subscriptions complete, Dana Da came from nowhere, with nothing in his hands, and wrote a chapter in its history which has hitherto been unpublished. He said that his first name was Dana, and his second was Da. Now, setting aside Dana of the New York "Sun," Dana is a Bhil name, and Da fits no native of India unless you accept the Bengali Dé as the original spelling. Da is Lap or Finnish; and Dana Da was neither Finn, Chin, Bhil, Bengali, Lap, Nair, Gond, Romaney, Magh, Bokhariot, Kurd, Armenian, Levantine, Jew, Persian, Punjabi, Madrasi, Parsee, nor anything else known to ethnologists. He was simply Dana Da, and declined to give further information. For the sake of brevity, and as roughly indicating his origin, he was called "The Native." He might have been the original Old Man of the Mountains, who is said to be the only authorized head of the Teacup Creed. Some people said that he was; but Dana Da used to smile and deny any connection with the cult; explaining that he was an "independent experimenter."

As I have said, he came from nowhere, with his hands behind his back, and studied the creed for three weeks; sitting at the feet of those best competent to explain its mysteries. Then he laughed aloud and went away, but the laugh might have been either of devotion or derision.

When he returned he was without money, but his pride

was unabated. He declared that he knew more about the things in heaven and earth than those who taught him, and for this contumacy was abandoned altogether.

His next appearance in public life was at a big cantonment in Upper India, and he was then telling fortunes with the help of three leaden dice, a very dirty old cloth, and a little tin box of opium pills. He told better fortunes when he was allowed half a bottle of whisky; but the things which he invented on the opium were quite worth the money. He was in reduced circumstances. Among other people's he told the fortune of an Englishman who had once been interested in the Simla creed, but who, later on, had married and forgotten all his old knowledge in the study of babies and Exchange. The Englishman allowed Dana Da to tell a fortune for charity's sake, and gave him five rupees, a dinner, and some old clothes. When he had eaten, Dana Da professed gratitude, and asked if there were anything he could do for his host—in the esoteric line.

"Is there any one that you love?" said Dana Da. The Englishman loved his wife, but had no desire to drag her name into the conversation. He therefore shook his head.

"Is there any one that you hate?" said Dana Da. The Englishman said there were several men whom he hated deeply.

"Very good," said Dana Da, upon whom the whisky and the opium were beginning to tell. "Only give me their names, and I will dispatch a Sending to them and kill them."

Now a Sending is a horrible arrangement, first invented, they say, in Iceland. It is a thing sent by a wizard, and may take any form, but most generally wanders about the land in the shape of a little purple cloud till it finds the sendee, and him it kills by changing into the form of a horse, or a cat, or a man without a face. It is not strictly a native patent, though *chamars* can, if irritated, dispatch a Sending which sits on the breast of their enemy by night and nearly kills him. Very few natives care to irritate *chamars* for this reason.

"Let me dispatch a Sending," said Dana Da; "I am nearly dead now with want, and drink, and opium; but I should like to kill a man before I die. I can send a Sending anywhere you choose, and in any form except in the shape of a man."

The Englishman had no friends that he wished to kill, but partly to soothe Dana Da, whose eyes were rolling, and partly to see what would be done, he asked whether a modified Sending could not be arranged for—such a Sending as should make a man's life a burden to him, and yet do him no harm. If this were possible, he notified his willingness to give Dana Da ten rupees for the job.

"I am not what I was once," said Dana Da, "and I must take the money because I am poor. To what Englishman shall I send it?"

"Send a Sending to Lone Sahib," said the Englishman, naming a man who had been most bitter in rebuking him for his apostasy from the Teacup Creed. Dana Da laughed and nodded.

"I could have chosen no better man myself," said he. "I will see that he finds the Sending about his path and about his bed."

He lay down on the hearth-rug, turned up the whites of his eyes, shivered all over and began to snort. This was magic, or opium, or the Sending, or all three. When he opened his eyes he vowed that the Sending had started upon the warpath, and was at that moment flying up to the town where Lone Sahib lives.

"Give me my ten rupees," said Dana Da, wearily, "and write a letter to Lone Sahib, telling him, and all who believe with him, that you and a friend are using a power greater than theirs. They will see that you are speaking the truth."

He departed unsteadily, with the promise of some more rupees if anything came of the Sending.

The Englishman sent a letter to Lone Sahib, couched in what he remembered of the terminology of the creed. He wrote: "I also, in the days of what you held to be my back-

sliding, have obtained enlightenment, and with enlightenmen has come power." Then he grew so deeply mysterious that the recipient of the letter would make neither head nor tail of it, and was proportionately impressed; for he fancied that his friend had become a "fifth-rounder." When a man is a "fifth-rounder" he can do more than Slade and Houdin combined.

Lone Sahib read the letter in five different fashions, and was beginning a sixth interpretation when his bearer dashed in with the news that there was a cat on the bed. Now, if there was one thing that Lone Sahib hated more than another it was a cat. He rated the bearer for not turning it out of the house. The bearer said that he was afraid. All the doors of the bedroom had been shut throughout the morning, and no real cat could possibly have entered the room. He would prefer not to meddle with the creature.

Lone Sahib entered the room gingerly, and there, on the pillow of his bed, sprawled and whimpered a wee white kitten, not a jumpsome, frisky little beast, but a slug-like crawler with his eyes barely opened and its paws lacking strength or direction—a kitten that ought to have been in a basket with its mamma. Lone Sahib caught it by the scruff of its neck, handed it over to the sweeper to be drowned, and fined the bearer four annas.

That evening, as he was reading in his room, he fancied that he saw something moving about on the hearth-rug, outside the circle of light from his reading-lamp. When the thing began to myowl, he realized that it was a kitten—a wee white kitten, nearly blind and very miserable. He was seriously angry, and spoke bitterly to his bearer, who said that there was no kitten in the room when he brought in the lamp, and real kittens of tender age generally had mother-cats in attendance.

"If the Presence will go out into the veranda and listen," said the bearer, "he will hear no cats. How, therefore, can the kitten on the bed and the kitten on the hearth-rug be real kittens?"

Lone Sahib went out to listen, and the bearer followed him, but there was no sound of Rachel mewing for her children. He returned to his room, having hurled the kitten down the hillside, and wrote out the incidents of the day for the benefit of his coreligionists. Those people were so absolutely free from superstition that they ascribed anything a little out of the common to agencies. As it was their business to know all about the agencies, they were on terms of almost indecent familiarity with manifestations of every kind. Their letters dropped from the ceiling—unstamped—and spirits used to squatter up and down their staircases all night. But they had never come into contact with kittens. Lone Sahib wrote out the facts, noting the hour and the minute, as every psychical observer is bound to do, and appending the Englishman's letter because it was the most mysterious document and might have had a bearing upon anything in this world or the next. An outsider would have translated all the tangle thus: "Look out! You laughed at me once, and now I am going to make you sit up."

Lone Sahib's coreligionists found that meaning in it; but their translation was refined and full of four-syllable words. They held a sederunt, and were filled with tremulous joy; for, in spite of their familiarity with all the other worlds and cycles, they had a very human awe of things sent from ghostland. They met in Lone Sahib's room in shrouded and sepulchral gloom, and their conclave was broken up by a clinking among the photo-frames on the mantel-piece. A wee white kitten, nearly blind, was looping and writhing itself between the clock and the candlesticks. That stopped all investigations or doubtings. Here was the manifestation in the flesh. It was, so far as could be seen, devoid of purpose, but it was a manifestation of undoubted authenticity.

They drafted a round robin to the Englishman, the backslider of old days, adjuring him in the interests of the creed to explain whether there was any connection between the embodiment of some Egyptian god or other (I have forgotten the name) and his communication. They called the kit-

ten Ra, or Toth, or Shem, or Noah, or something; and when Lone Sahib confessed that the first one had, at his most misguided instance, been drowned by the sweeper, they said consolingly that in his next life he would be a "bounder," and not even a "rounder" of the lowest grade. These words may not be quite correct, but they express the sense of the house accurately.

When the Englishman received the round robin—it came by post—he was startled and bewildered. He sent into the bazaar for Dana Da, who read the letter and laughed. "That is my Sending," said he. "I told you I would work well. Now give me another ten rupees."

"But what in the world is this gibberish about Egyptian gods?" asked the Englishman.

"Cats," said Dana Da, with a hiccough, for he had discovered the Englishman's whisky bottle. "Cats and cats and cats! Never was such a Sending. A hundred of cats. Now give me ten more rupees and write as I dictate."

Dana Da's letter was a curiosity. It bore the Englishman's signature, and hinted at cats—at a Sending of cats. The mere words on paper were creepy and uncanny to behold.

"What have you done, though?" said the Englishman; "I am as much in the dark as ever. Do you mean to say that you can actually send this absurd Sending you talk about?"

"Judge for yourself," said Dana Da. "What does that letter mean? In a little time they will all be at my feet and yours, and I, oh, glory! will be drugged or drunk all day long."

Dana Da knew his people.

When a man who hates cats wakes up in the morning and finds a little squirming kitten on his breast, or puts his hand into his ulster-pocket and finds a little half-dead kitten where his gloves should be, or opens his trunk and finds a vile kitten among his dress-shirts, or goes for a long ride with his mackintosh strapped on his saddle-bow and shakes

a little squawling kitten from its folds when he opens it, or goes out to dinner and finds a little blind kitten under his chair, or stays at home and finds a writhing kitten under the quilt, or wriggling among his boots, or hanging, head downward, in his tobacco-jar, or being mangled by his terrier in the veranda—when such a man finds one kitten, neither more nor less, once a day in a place where no kitten rightly could or should be, he is naturally upset. When he dare not murder his daily trove because he believes it to be a manifestation, an emissary, an embodiment, and half a dozen other things all out of the regular course of nature, he is more than upset. He is actually distressed. Some of Lone Sahib's coreligionists thought that he was a highly favored individual; but many said that if he had treated the first kitten with proper respect—as suited a Toth-Ra-Tum-Sennacherib Embodiment—all this trouble would have been averted. They compared him to the Ancient Mariner, but none the less they were proud of him and proud of the Englishman who had sent the manifestation. They did not call it a Sending because Icelandic magic was not in their programme.

After sixteen kittens—that is to say, after one fortnight, for there were three kittens on the first day to impress the fact of the Sending, the whole camp was uplifted by a letter —it came flying through a window—from the Old Man of the Mountains—the head of all the creed—explaining the manifestation in the most beautiful language and soaking up all the credit of it for himself. The Englishman, said the letter, was not there at all. He was a backslider without power or asceticism, who couldn't even raise a table by force of volition, much less project an army of kittens through space. The entire arrangement, said the letter, was strictly orthodox, worked and sanctioned by the highest authorities within the pale of the creed. There was great joy at this, for some of the weaker brethren, seeing that an outsider who had been working on independent lines could create kittens, whereas their own rulers had never gone beyond crockery—

and broken at that—were showing a desire to break line on their own trail. In fact, there was the promise of a schism. A second round robin was drafted to the Englishman, beginning: "Oh, Scoffer," and ending with a selection of curses from the rites of Mizraim and Memphis and the Commination of Jugana, who was a "fifth-rounder," upon whose name an upstart "third-rounder" once traded. A papal excommunication is a *billet-doux* compared to the Commination of Jugana. The Englishman had been proved under the hand and seal of the Old Man of the Mountains to have appropriated virtue and pretended to have power which, in reality, belonged only to the supreme head. Naturally the round robin did not spare him.

He handed the letter to Dana Da to translate into decent English. The effect on Dana Da was curious. At first he was furiously angry, and then he laughed for five minutes.

"I had thought," he said, "that they would have come to me. In another week I would have shown that I sent the Sending, and they would have discrowned the Old Man of the Mountains who has sent this Sending of mine. Do you do nothing? The time has come for me to act. Write as I dictate, and I will put them to shame. But give me ten more rupees."

At Dana Da's dictation the Englishman wrote nothing less than a formal challenge to the Old Man of the Mountains. It wound up: "And if this manifestation be from your hand, then let it go forward; but if it be from my hand, I will that the Sending shall cease in two days' time. On that day there shall be twelve kittens and thenceforward none at all. The people shall judge between us." This was signed by Dana Da, who added pentacles and pantagrams, and a *crux ansata*, and half a dozen *swastikas*, and a Triple Tau to his name, just to show that he was all he laid claim to be.

The challenge was read out to the gentlemen and ladies, and they remembered then that Dana Da had laughed at them some years ago. It was officially announced that the

Old Man of the Mountains would treat the matter with contempt; Dana Da being an independent investigator without a single "round" at the back of him. But this did not soothe his people. They wanted to see a fight. They were very human for all their spirituality. Lone Sahib, who was really being worn out with kittens, submitted meekly to his fate. He felt that he was being "kittened to prove the power of Dana Da," as the poet says.

When the stated day dawned, the shower of kittens began. Some were white and some were tabby, and all were about the same loathsome age. Three were on his hearth-rug, three in his bath-room, and the other six turned up at intervals among the visitors who came to see the prophecy break down. Never was a more satisfactory Sending. On the next day there were no kittens, and the next day and all the other days were kittenless and quiet. The people murmured and looked to the Old Man of the Mountains for an explanation. A letter, written on a palm-leaf, dropped from the ceiling, but every one except Lone Sahib felt that letters were not what the occasion demanded. There should have been cats, there should have been cats—full-grown ones. The letter proved conclusively that there had been a hitch in the psychic current which, colliding with a dual identity, had interfered with the percipient activity all along the main line. The kittens were still going on, but owing to some failure in the developing fluid, they were not materialized. The air was thick with letters for a few days afterward. Unseen hands played Glück and Beethoven on finger-bowls and clock-shades; but all men felt that psychic life was a mockery without materialized kittens. Even Lone Sahib shouted with the majority on this head. Dana Da's letters were very insulting, and if he had then offered to lead a new departure, there is no knowing what might not have happened.

But Dana Da was dying of whisky and opium in the Englishman's godown, and had small heart for new creeds.

"They have been put to shame," said he. "Never was such a Sending. It has killed me."

"Nonsense," said the Englishman, "you are going to die, Dana Da, and that sort of stuff must be left behind. I'll admit that you have made some queer things come about. Tell me honestly, now, how was it done?"

"Give me ten more rupees," said Dana Da, faintly, "and if I die before I spend them, bury them with me." The silver was counted out while Dana Da was fighting with death. His hand closed upon the money and he smiled a grim smile.

"Bend low," he whispered. The Englishman bent.

"*Bunnia*—mission-school—expelled—*box-wallah* (peddler)—Ceylon pearl-merchant—all mine English education—outcasted, and made up name Dana Da—England with American thought-reading man and—and—you gave me ten rupees several times—I gave the Sahib's bearer two-eight a month for cats—little, little cats. I wrote, and he put them about—very clever man. Very few kittens now in the bazaar. Ask Lone Sahib's sweeper's wife."

So saying, Dana Da gasped and passed away into a land where, if all be true, there are no materializations and the making of new creeds is discouraged.

But consider the gorgeous simplicity of it all!

ON THE CITY WALL

Then she let them down by a cord through the window; for her house was upon the town wall, and she dwelt upon the wall.

—*Joshua* ii. 15

LALUN is a member of the most ancient profession in the world. Lilith was her very-great-grandmamma, and that was before the days of Eve, as every one knows. In the West, people say rude things about Lalun's profession, and write lectures about it, and distribute the lectures to young

persons in order that morality may be preserved. In the East, where the profession is hereditary, descending from mother to daughter, nobody writes lectures or takes any notice, and that is a distinct proof of the inability of the East to manage its own affairs.

Lalun's real husband, for even ladies of Lalun's profession in the East must have husbands, was a great, big jujube-tree. Her mamma, who had married a fig, spent ten thousand rupees on Lalun's wedding, which was blessed by forty-seven clergymen of mamma's church, and distributed five thousand rupees in charity to the poor. And that was the custom of the land. The advantages of having a jujube-tree for a husband are obvious. You cannot hurt his feelings, and he looks imposing.

Lalun's husband stood on the plain outside the city walls, and Lalun's house was upon the east wall facing the river. If you fell from the broad window-seat you dropped thirty feet sheer into the city ditch. But if you stayed where you should and looked forth, you saw all the cattle of the city being driven down to water, the students of the government college playing cricket, the high grass and trees that fringed the river-bank, the great sand-bars that ribbed the river, the red tombs of dead emperors beyond the river, and very far away through the blue heat-haze, a glint of the snows of the Himalayas.

Wali Dad used to lie in the window-seat for hours at a time watching this view. He was a young Mohammedan who was suffering acutely from education of the English variety and knew it. His father had sent him to a mission-school to get wisdom, and Wali Dad had absorbed more than ever his father or the missionaries intended he should. When his father died, Wali Dad was independent and spent two years experimenting with the creeds of the earth and reading books that are of no use to anybody.

After he had made an unsuccessful attempt to enter the Roman Catholic Church and the Presbyterian fold at the same time (the missionaries found him out and called him

names, but they didn't understand his trouble), he discovered Lalun on the city wall and became the most constant of her few admirers. He possessed a head that English artists at home would rave over and paint amid impossible surroundings—a face that female novelists would use with delight through nine hundred pages. In reality he was only a clean-bred young Mohammedan, with penciled eyebrows, small cut nostrils, little feet and hands, and a very tired look in his eyes. By virtue of his twenty-two years he had grown a neat black beard which he stroked with pride and kept delicately scented. His life seemed to be divided between borrowing books from me and making love to Lalun in the window-seat. He composed songs about her, and some of the songs are sung to this day in the city from the street of the mutton-butchers to the coppersmiths' ward.

One song, the prettiest of all, says that the beauty of Lalun was so great that it troubled the hearts of the British government and caused them to lose their peace of mind. That is the way the song is sung in the streets; but, if you examine it carefully and know the key to the explanation, you will find that there are three puns in it—on "beauty," "heart," and "peace of mind"—so that it runs: "By the subtlety of Lalun the administration of the government was troubled and it lost such and such a man." When Wali Dad sings that song his eyes glow like hot coals and Lalun leans back among the cushions and throws bunches of jasmine buds at Wali Dad.

But first it is necessary to explain something about the supreme government which is above all and below all and behind all. Gentlemen come from England, spend a few weeks in India, walk round this great Sphinx of the Plains, and write books upon its ways and its works, denouncing or praising it as their own ignorance prompts. Consequently all the world knows how the supreme government conducts itself. But no one, not even the supreme government, knows everything about the administration of the empire. Year by year England sends out fresh drafts for the first

fighting-line, which is officially called the Indian Civil Service. These die, or kill themselves by overwork, or are worried to death or broken in health and hope in order that the land may be protected from death and sickness, famine and war, and may eventually become capable of standing alone. It will never stand alone, but the idea is a pretty one, and men are willing to die for it, and yearly the work of pushing and coaxing and scolding and petting the country into good living goes forward. If an advance be made all credit is given to the native, while the Englishmen stand back and wipe their foreheads. If a failure occurs the Englishmen step forward and take the blame. Overmuch tenderness of this kind has bred a strong belief among many natives that the native is capable of administering the country, and many devout Englishmen believe this also, because the theory is stated in beautiful English with all the latest political garnish.

There be other men who, though uneducated, see visions and dream dreams, and they, too, hope to administer the country in their own way—that is to say, with a garnish of red sauce. Such men must exist among two hundred million people, and, if they are not attended to, may cause trouble and even break the great idol called "Pax Britannic," which, as the newspapers say, lives between Peshawur and Cape Comorin. Were the day of doom to dawn to-morrow, you would find the supreme government "taking measures to allay popular excitement" and putting guards upon the graveyards that the dead might troop forth orderly. The youngest civilian would arrest Gabriel on his own responsibility if the archangel could not produce a deputy commissioner's permission to "make music or other noises," as the form says.

Whence it is easy to see that mere men of the flesh who would create a tumult must fare badly at the hands of the supreme government. And they do. There is no outward sign of excitement; there is no confusion; there is no knowledge. When due and sufficient reasons have been given, weighed and approved, the machinery moves forward, and

the dreamer of dreams and the seer of visions is gone from his friends and following. He enjoys the hospitality of government; there is no restriction upon his movements within certain limits; but he must not confer any more with his brother dreamers. Once in every six months the supreme government assures itself that he is well and takes formal acknowledgment of his existence. No one protests against his detention, because the few people who know about it are in deadly fear of seeming to know him; and never a single newspaper "takes up his case" or organizes demonstrations on his behalf, because the newspapers of India have got behind that lying proverb which says the pen is mightier than the sword, and can walk delicately and with circumspection.

So now you know as much as you ought about Wali Dad, the educational mixture, and the supreme government.

Lalun has not yet been described. She would need, so Wali Dad says, a thousand pens of gold and ink scented with musk. She has been variously compared to the moon, the Dil Sagar Lake, a spotted quail, a gazelle, the sun on the Desert of Kutch, the dawn, the stars, and the young bamboo. These comparisons imply that she is beautiful exceedingly according to the native standards, which are practically the same as those of the West. Her eyes are black and her hair is black, and her eyebrows are black as leeches; her mouth is tiny and says witty things; her hands are tiny and have saved much money; her feet are tiny and have trodden on the naked hearts of many men. But, as Wali Dad sings: "Lalun *is* Lalun, and when you have said that, you have only come to the beginnings of knowledge."

The little house on the city wall was just big enough to hold Lalun, and her maid, and a pussy-cat with a silver collar. A big pink and blue cut-glass chandelier hung from the ceiling of the reception-room. A petty Nawab had given Lalun the horror, and she kept it for politeness' sake. The floor of the room was of polished chunam, white as curds. A latticed window of carved wood was set in one wall; there was a profusion of squabby pluffy cushions and fat carpets

everywhere, and Lalun's silver *huqa*, studded with turquoises, had a special little carpet all to its shining self. Wali Dad was nearly as permanent a fixture as the chandelier. As I have said, he lay in the window-seat and meditated on life and death and Lalun—'specially Lalun. The feet of the young men of the city tended to her doorways and then—retired, for Lalun was a particular maiden, slow of speech, reserved of mind, and not in the least inclined to orgies which were nearly certain to end in strife. "If I am of no value, I am unworthy of this honor," said Lalun. "If I am of value, they are unworthy of me." And that was a crooked sentence.

In the long hot nights of latter April and May all the city seemed to assemble in Lalun's little white room to smoke and to talk. Shiahs of the grimmest and most uncompromising persuasion; Sufis who had lost all belief in the Prophet and retained but little in God; wandering Hindoo priests passing southward on their way to the Central India fairs and other affairs; pundits in black gowns, with spectacles on their noses and undigested wisdom in their insides; bearded headmen of the wards; Sikhs with all the details of the latest ecclesiastical scandal in the Golden Temple; red-eyed priests from beyond the border, looking like trapped wolves and talking like ravens; M.A.'s of the university, very superior and very voluble—all these people and more also you might find in the white room. Wali Dad lay in the window-seat and listened to the talk.

"It is Lalun's salon," said Wali Dad to me, "and it is eclectic—is not that the word? Outside of a Freemason's lodge I have never seen such gatherings. There I dined once with a Jew—a Yahoudi!" He spat into the city ditch with apologies for allowing national feelings to overcome him. "Though I have lost every belief in the world," said he, "and try to be proud of my losing, I cannot help hating a Jew. Lalun admits no Jews here."

"But what in the world do all these men do?" I asked.

"The curse of our country," said Wali Dad. "They

talk. It is like the Athenians—always hearing and telling some new thing. Ask the Pearl and she will show you how much she knows of the news of the city and the province. Lalun knows everything."

"Lalun," I said at random—she was talking to a gentleman of the Kurd persuasion who had come in from God knows where—"when does the 175th Regiment go to Agra?"

"It does not go at all," said Lalun, without turning her head. "They have ordered the 118th to go in its stead. That regiment goes to Lucknow in three months, unless they give a fresh order."

"That is so," said Wali Dad, without a shade of doubt. "Can you, with your telegrams and your newspapers, do better? Always hearing and telling some new thing," he went on. "My friend, has your God ever smitten a European nation for gossiping in the bazaars? India has gossiped for centuries—always standing in the bazaars until the soldiers go by. Therefore . . . you are here to-day instead of starving in your own country, and I am not a Mohammedan —I am a product—a 'demnition' product. That also I owe to you and yours; that I cannot make an end to any sentence without quoting from your authors." He pulled at the *huqa* and mourned, half feelingly, half in earnest, for the shattered hopes of his youth. Wali Dad was always mourning over something or other—the country of which he despaired, or the creed in which he had lost faith, or the life of the English which he could by no means understand.

Lalun never mourned. She played little songs on the *sitar*, and to hear her sing, "Oh, Peacock, Cry Again," was always a fresh pleasure. She knew all the songs that have ever been sung, from the war-songs of the south that make the old men angry with the young men and the young men angry with the state, to the love songs of the north where the swords whinny-whicker like angry kites in the pauses between the kisses, and the passes fill with armed men, and the lover is torn from his beloved and cries *Ai! Ai! Ai!* evermore. She knew how to make up tobacco for

the *huqa* so that it smelled like the gates of paradise and wafted you gently through them. She could embroider strange things in gold and silver, and dance softly with the moonlight when it came in at the window. Also she knew the hearts of men, and the heart of the city, and whose wives were faithful and whose untrue, and more of the secrets of the government offices than are good to be set down in this place. Nasiban, her maid, said that her jewelry was worth ten thousand pounds, and that, some night, a thief would enter and murder her for its possession; but Lalun said that all the city would tear that thief limb from limb, and that he, whoever he was, knew it.

So she took her *sitar* and sat in the window-seat and sung a song of old days that had been sung by a girl of her profession in an armed camp on the eve of a great battle—the day before the fords of the Jumna ran red and Sivaji fled fifty miles to Delhi with a Toorkh stallion at his horse's tail and another Lalun on his saddle-bow. It was what men call a Mahratta *laonee*, and it said:

Their warrior forces Chimnajee
Before the Peishwa led,
The children of the Sun and Fire
Behind him turned and fled.

And the chorus said:

With them there fought who rides so free
With sword and turban red,
The warrior-youth who earns his fee
At peril of his head.

"At peril of his head," said Wali Dad in English to me. "Thanks to your government, all our heads are protected, and with the educational facilities at my command"—his eyes twinkled wickedly—"I might be a distinguished member of the local administration. Perhaps, in time, I might even be a member of a legislative council."

"Don't speak English," said Lalun, bending over her

sitar afresh. The chorus went out from the city wall to the blackened wall of Fort Amara which dominates the city. No man knows the precise extent of Fort Amara. Three kings built it hundreds of years ago, and they say that there are miles of underground rooms beneath its walls. It is peopled with many ghosts, a detachment of garrison artillery and a company of infantry. In its prime it held ten thousand men and filled its ditches with corpses.

"At peril of his head," sung Lalun again and again.

A head moved on one of the ramparts—the gray head of an old man—and a voice, rough as shark-skin on a sword-hilt, sent back the last line of the chorus and broke into a song that I could not understand, though Lalun and Wali Dad listened intently.

"What is it?" I asked. "Who is it?"

"A consistent man," said Wali Dad. "He fought you in '46, when he was a warrior-youth; refought you in '57, and he tried to fight you in '71, but you had learned the trick of blowing men from guns too well. Now he is old; but he would still fight if he could."

"Is he a Wahabi, then? Why should he answer to a Mahratta *laonee* if he be Wahabi—or Sikh?" said I.

"I do not know," said Wali Dad. "He has lost, perhaps, his religion. Perhaps he wishes to be a king. Perhaps he is a king. I do not know his name."

"That is a lie, Wali Dad. If you know his career you must know his name."

"That is quite true. I belong to a nation of liars. I would rather not tell you his name. Think for yourself."

Lalun finished her song, pointed to the fort and said simply: "Khem Singh."

"H'm," said Wali Dad. "If the Pearl chooses to tell you the Pearl is a fool."

I translated to Lalun, who laughed. "I choose to tell what I choose to tell. They kept Khem Singh in Burmah," said she. "They kept him there for many years until his mind was changed in him. So great was the kindness of

the government. Finding this, they sent him back to his own country that he might look upon it before he died. He is an old man, but when he looks upon this his country his memory will come. Moreover, there be many who remember him."

"He is an interesting survival," said Wali Dad, pulling at the *huqa*. "He returns to a country now full of educational and political reform, but, as the Pearl says, there are many who remember him. He was once a great man. There will never be any more great men in India. They will all, when they are boys, go whoring after strange gods, and they will become citizens—'fellow-citizens'—'illustrious fellow-citizens.' What is it that the native papers call them?"

Wali Dad seemed to be in a very bad temper. Lalun looked out of the window and smiled into the dust-haze. I went away thinking about Khem Singh who had once made history with a thousand followers, and would have been a princeling but for the power of the supreme government aforesaid.

The senior captain commanding Fort Amara was away on leave, but the subaltern, his deputy, had drifted down to the club, where I found him and inquired of him whether it was really true that a political prisoner had been added to the attractions of the fort. The subaltern explained at great length, for this was the first time that he had held command of the fort and his glory lay heavy upon him.

"Yes," said he, "a man was sent in to me about a week ago from down the line—a thorough gentleman whoever he is. Of course I did all I could for him. He had his two servants and some silver cooking-pots, and he looked for all the world like a native officer. I called him Subadar Sahib; just as well to be on the safe side, y'know. 'Look here, Subadar sahib,' I said, 'you're handed over to my authority, and I'm supposed to guard you. Now I don't want to make your life hard, but you must make things easy for me. All the fort is at your disposal, from the flagstaff to the dry ditch, and I shall be happy to entertain you in any way I

can, but you mustn't take advantage of it. Give me your word that you won't try to escape, Subadar Sahib, and I'll give you my word that you shall have no heavy guard put over you.' I thought the best way of getting at him was by going at him straight, y'know; and it was, by Jove! The old man gave me his word, and moved about the fort as contented as a sick crow. He's a rummy chap—always asking to be told where he is and what the buildings about him are. I had to sign a slip of blue paper when he turned up, acknowledging receipt of his body and all that, and I'm responsible, y'know, that he doesn't get away. Queer thing, though, looking after a Johnnie old enough to be your grandfather, isn't it? Come to the fort one of these days and see him?"

For reasons which will appear, I never went to the fort while Khem Singh was then within its walls. I knew him only as a gray head seen from Lalun's window—a gray head and a harsh voice. But natives told me that, day by day, as he looked upon the fair lands round Amara, his memory came back to him and, with it, the old hatred against the government that had been nearly effaced in far-off Burmah. So he raged up and down the west face of the fort from morning till noon and from evening till the night, devising vain things in his heart and croaking war-songs when Lalun sung on the city walls. As he grew more acquainted with the subaltern he unburdened his old heart of some of the passions that had withered it. "Sahib," he used to say, tapping his stick against the parapet, "when I was a young man I was one of twenty thousand horsemen who came out of the city and rode round the plain here. Sahib, I was the leader of a hundred, then of a thousand, then of five thousand, and now!"—he pointed to his two servants. "But from the beginning to to-day I would cut the throats of all the sahibs in the land if I could. Hold me fast, sahib, lest I get away and return to those who would follow me. I forgot them when I was in Burmah, but now that I am in my own country again, I remember everything."

"Do you remember that you have given me your honor not to make your tendance a hard matter?" said the subaltern.

"Yes, to you, only to you, sahib," said Khem Singh. "To you because you are of a pleasant countenance. If my turn comes again, sahib, I will not hang you nor cut your throat."

"Thank you," said the subaltern, gravely, as he looked along the line of guns that could pound the city to powder in half an hour. "Let us go into our own quarters, Khem Singh. Come and talk with me after dinner."

Khem Singh would sit on his own cushion at the subaltern's feet, drinking heavy, scented anise-seed brandy in great gulps, and telling strange stories of Fort Amara, which had been a palace, in the old days, of begums and ranees tortured to death—ay, in the very vaulted chamber that now served as a mess-room; would tell stories of Sobraon that made the subaltern's cheeks flush and tingle with pride of race, and of the Kuka rising from which so much was expected and the foreknowledge of which was shared by a hundred thousand souls. But he never told tales of '57, because, as he said, he was the subaltern's guest, and '57 is a year that no man, black or white, cares to speak of. Once only, when the anise-seed brandy had slightly affected his head, he said: "Sahib, speaking now of a matter which lay between Sobraon and the affair of the Kukas, it was ever a wonder to us that you stayed your hand at all, and that, having stayed it, you did not make the land one prison. Now I hear from without that you do great honor to all men of our country, and by your own hands are destroying the terror of your name which is your strong rock and defense. This is a foolish thing. Will oil and water mix? Now in '57—"

"I was not born then, Subadar Sahib," said the subaltern, and Khem Singh reeled to his quarters.

The subaltern would tell me of these conversations at the club, and my desire to see Khem Singh increased. But

Wali Dad, sitting in the window-seat of the house on the city wall, said that it would be a cruel thing to do, and Lalun pretended that I preferred the society of a grizzled old Sikh to hers.

"Here is tobacco, here is talk, here are many friends and all the news of the city, and, above all, here is myself. I will tell you stories and sing you songs, and Wali Dad will talk his English nonsense in your ears. Is that worse than watching the caged animal yonder? Go to-morrow then, if you must, but to-day such and such a one will be here, and he will speak of wonderful things."

It happened that to-morrow never came, and the warm heat of the latter rains gave place to the chill of early October almost before I was aware of the flight of the year. The captain commanding the fort returned from leave and took charge of Khem Singh according to the laws of seniority. The captain was not a nice man. He called all natives "niggers," which, besides being extreme bad form, shows gross ignorance.

"What's the use of telling off two Tommies to watch that old nigger?" said he.

"I fancy it soothes his vanity," said the subaltern. "The men are ordered to keep well out of his way, but he takes them as a tribute to his importance, poor old beast."

"I won't have line men taken off regular guards in this way. Put on a couple of native infantry."

"Sikhs?" said the subaltern, lifting his eyebrows.

"Sikhs, Pathans, Dogras—they're all alike, these black vermin," and the captain talked to Khem Singh in a manner which hurt that old gentleman's feelings. Fifteen years before, when he had been caught for the second time, every one looked upon him as a sort of tiger. He liked being regarded in this light. But he forgot that the world goes forward in fifteen years, and many subalterns are promoted to captaincies.

"The captain-pig is in charge of the fort?" said Khem Singh to his native guard every morning. And the native

guard said: "Yes, Subadar Sahib," in deference to his age and his air of distinction; but they did not know who he was.

In those days the gathering in Lalun's little white room was always large and talked more mightily than before.

"The Greeks," said Wali Dad, who had been borrowing my books, "the inhabitants of the city of Athens, where they were always hearing and telling some new thing, rigorously secluded their women—who were mostly fools. Hence the glorious institution of the heterodox women—is it not?—who were amusing and not fools. All the Greek philosophers delighted in their company. Tell me, my friend, how it goes now in Greece and the other places upon the Continent of Europe. Are your women-folk also fools?"

"Wali Dad," I said, "you never speak to us about your women-folk and we never speak about ours to you. That is the bar between us."

"Yes," said Wali Dad, "it is curious to think that our common meeting-place should be here, in the house of a common—how do you call her?" He pointed with the pipe-mouth to Lalun.

"Lalun is nothing else but Lalun," I said, and that was perfectly true. "But if you took your place in the world, Wali Dad, and gave up dreaming dreams—"

"I might wear an English coat and trousers. I might be a leading Mohammedan pleader. I might even be received at the commissioner's tennis-parties where the English stand on one side and the natives on the other, in order to promote social intercourse throughout the empire. Heart's heart," said he to Lalun, quickly, "the sahib says that I ought to quit you."

"The sahib is always talking stupid talk," returned Lalun with a laugh. "In this house I am a queen and thou art a king. The sahib"—she put her arms above her head and thought for a moment—"the sahib shall be our vizier—thine and mine, Wali Dad, because he has said that thou shouldst leave me."

Wali Dad laughed immoderately, and I laugned too. "Be it so," said he. "My friend, are you willing to take this lucrative government appointment? Lalun, what shall his pay be?"

But Lalun began to sing, and for the rest of the time there was no hope of getting a sensible answer from her or Wali Dad. When the one stopped, the other began to quote Persian poetry with a triple pun in every other line. Some of it was not strictly proper, but it was all very funny, and it only came to an end when a fat person in black, with gold pince-nez, sent up his name to Lalun, and Wali Dad dragged me into the twinkling night to walk in a big rose garden and talk heresies about religion and governments and a man's career in life.

The Mohurrum, the great mourning festival of the Mohammedans, was close at hand, and the things that Wali Dad said about religious fanaticism would have secured his expulsion from the loosest-thinking Moslem sect. There were the rose-bushes round us, the stars above us, and from every quarter of the city came the boom of the big Mohurrum drums. You must know that the city is divided in fairly equal proportions between the Hindoos and the Mussulmans, and when both creeds belong to the fighting races, a big religious festival gives ample chance for trouble. When they can—that is to say when the authorities are weak enough to allow it—the Hindoos do their best to arrange some minor feast-day of their own in time to clash with the period of general mourning for the martyrs Hasan and Hussain, the heroes of the Mohurrum. Gilt and painted paper presentations of their tombs are borne with shouting and wailing, music, torches and yells, through the principal thoroughfares of the city; which fakements are called *tazias*. Their passage is rigorously laid down beforehand by the police, and detachments of police accompany each *tazia*, lest the Hindoos should throw bricks at it and the peace of the queen and the heads of her loyal subjects should thereby be broken. Mohurrum time in a "fighting" town means anxiety to all

the officials, because, if a riot breaks out, the officials and not the rioters are held responsible. The former must foresee everything, and while not making their precautions ridiculously elaborate, must see that they are at least adequate.

"Listen to the drums!" said Wali Dad. "That is the heart of the people—empty and making much noise. How, think you, will the Mohurrum go this year? I think that there will be trouble."

He turned down a side-street and left me alone with the stars and a sleepy police patrol. Then I went to bed and dreamed that Wali Dad had sacked the city and I was made vizier, with Lalun's silver *huqa* for mark of office.

All day the Mohurrum drums beat in the city, and all day deputations of tearful Hindoo gentlemen besieged the deputy commissioner with assurances that they would be murdered ere next dawning by the Mohammedans. "Which," said the deputy commissioner, in confidence to the head of police, "is a pretty fair indication that the Hindoos are going to make 'emselves unpleasant. I think we can arrange a little surprise for them. I have given the heads of both creeds fair warning. If they choose to disregard it, so much the worse for them."

There was a large gathering in Lalun's house that night, but of men that I had never seen before, if I except the fat gentleman in black with the gold pince-nez. Wali Dad lay in the window-seat, more bitterly scornful of his faith and its manifestations than I had ever known him. Lalun's maid was very busy cutting up and mixing tobacco for the guests. We could hear the thunder of the drums as the processions accompanying each *tazia* marched to the central gathering-place in the plain outside the city, preparatory to their triumphant re-entry and circuit within the walls. All the streets seemed ablaze with torches, and only Fort Amara was black and silent.

When the noise of the drums ceased, no one in the white room spoke for a time. "The first *tazia* has moved off," said Wali Dad, looking to the plain.

"That is very early," said the man with the pince-nez. "It is only half past eight." The company rose and departed.

"Some of them were men from Ladakh," said Lalun, when the last had gone. "They brought me brick-tea such as the Russians sell, and a tea-urn from Peshawur. Show me, now, how the English memsahibs make tea."

The brick-tea was abominable. When it was finished Wali Dad suggested a descent into the streets. "I am nearly sure that there will be trouble to-night," he said. "All the city thinks so, and *Vox Populi* is *Vox Dei*, as the Babus say. Now I tell you that at the corner of the Padshahi Gate you will find my horse all this night if you want to go about and to see things. It is a most disgraceful exhibition. Where is the pleasure of saying '*Ya Hasan, Ya Hussain*' twenty thousand times in a night?"

All the professions—there were two-and-twenty of them—were now well within the city walls. The drums were beating afresh, the crowd were howling "*Ya Hasan! Ya Hussain!*" and beating their breasts, the brass bands were playing their loudest, and at every corner where space allowed Mohammedan preachers were telling the lamentable story of the death of the martyrs. It was impossible to move except with the crowd, for the streets were not more than twenty feet wide. In the Hindoo quarters the shutters of all the shops were up and cross-barred. As the first *tazia*, a gorgeous erection ten feet high, was borne aloft on the shoulders of a score of stout men into the semi-darkness of the gully of the horsemen, a brickbat crashed through its talc and tinsel sides.

"Into Thy hands, O Lord!" murmured Wali Dad, profanely, as a yell went up from behind, and a native officer of police jammed his horse through the crowd. Another brickbat followed, and the *tazia* staggered and swayed where it had stopped.

"Go on! In the name of the Sirkar, go forward!" shouted the policeman, but there was an ugly cracking

and splintering of shutters, and the crowd halted, with oaths and growlings, before the house whence the brickbat had been thrown.

Then, without any warning, broke the storm—not only in the gully of the horsemen, but in half a dozen other places. The *tazias* rocked like ships at sea, the long pole-torches dipped and rose round them while the men shouted: "The Hindoos are dishonoring the *tazias!* Strike! Strike! Into their temples for the faith!" The six or eight policemen with each *tazia* drew their batons and struck as long as they could, in the hope of forcing the mob forward, but they were overpowered, and as contingents of Hindoos poured into the streets, the fight became general. Half a mile away, where the *tazias* were yet untouched, the drums and the shrieks of "*Ya Hasan! Ya Hussain!*" continued, but not for long. The priests at the corners of the streets knocked the legs from the bedsteads that supported their pulpits and smote for the faith, while stones fell from the silent houses upon friend and foe, and the packed streets bellowed: "*Din! Din! Din!*" A *tazia* caught fire, and was dropped for a flaming barrier between Hindoo and Mussulman at the corner of the gully. Then the crowd surged forward, and Wali Dad drew me close to the stone pillar of a well.

"It was intended from the beginning!" he shouted in my ear, with more heat than blank unbelief should be guilty of. "The bricks were carried up to the houses beforehand. These swine of Hindoos! We shall be gutting kine in their temples to-night!"

Tazia after *tazia*, some burning, others torn to pieces, hurried past us and the mob with them, howling, shrieking, and striking at the house doors in their flight. At last we saw the reason of the rush. Hugonin, the assistant district superintendent of police, a boy of twenty, had got together thirty constables and was forcing the crowd through the streets. His old gray police-horse showed no sign of uneasiness as it was spurred breast-on into the crowd, and

the long dog-whip with which he had armed himself was never still.

"They know we haven't enough police to hold 'em," he cried as he passed me, mopping a cut on his face. "They know we haven't! Aren't any of the men from the club coming down to help? Get on, you sons of burned fathers!" The dog-whip cracked across the writhing backs, and the constables smote afresh with baton and gun-butt. With these passed the lights and the shouting, and Wali Dad began to swear under his breath. From Fort Amara shot up a single rocket; then two side by side. It was the signal for troops.

Petitt, the deputy commissioner, covered with dust and sweat, but calm and gently smiling, cantered up the clean-swept street in rear of the main body of the rioters. "No one killed yet," he shouted. "I'll keep 'em on the run till dawn! Don't let 'em halt, Hugonin! Trot 'em about till the troops come."

The science of the defense lay solely in keeping the mob on the move. If they had breathing-space they would halt and fire a house, and then the work of restoring order would be more difficult, to say the least of it. Flames have the same effect on a crowd as blood has on a wild beast.

Word had reached the club and men in evening-dress were beginning to show themselves and lend a hand in heading off and breaking up the shouting masses with stirrup-leathers, whips, or chance-found staves. They were not very often attacked, for the rioters had sense enough to know that the death of a European would not mean one hanging but many, and possibly the appearance of the thrice-dreaded artillery. The clamor in the city redoubled. The Hindoos had descended into the streets in real earnest and ere long the mob returned. It was a strange sight. There were no *tazias*—only their riven platforms—and there were no police. Here and there a city dignitary, Hindoo or Mohammedan, was vainly imploring his coreligionists to keep quiet and behave themselves—advice for which his white

beard was pulled with contumely. Then a native officer of police, unhorsed but still using his spurs with effect, would be seen borne along in the throng, warning all the world of the danger of insulting the government. Everywhere were men striking aimlessly with sticks, grasping each other by the throat, howling and foaming with rage, or beating with their bare hands on the doors of the houses.

"It is a lucky thing that they are fighting with natural weapons," I said to Wali Dad, "else we should have half the city killed."

I turned as I spoke and looked at his face. His nostrils were distended, his eyes were fixed, and he was smiting himself softly on the breast. The crowd poured by with renewed riot—a gang of Mussulmans hard-pressed by some hundred Hindoo fanatics. Wali Dad left my side with an oath, and shouting: "*Ya Hasan! Ya Hussain!*" plunged into the thick of the fight, where I lost sight of him.

I fled by a side alley to the Padshahi Gate, where I found Wali Dad's horse, and thence rode to the fort. Once outside the city wall, the tumult sunk to a dull roar, very impressive under the stars and reflecting great credit on the fifty thousand angry able-bodied men who were making it. The troops who, at the deputy commissioner's instance, had been ordered to rendezvous quietly near the fort, showed no signs of being impressed. Two companies of native infantry, a squadron of native cavalry and a company of British infantry were kicking their heels in the shadow of the east face, waiting for orders to march in. I am sorry to say that they were all pleased, unholily pleased, at the chance of what they called "a little fun." The senior officers, to be sure, grumbled at having been kept out of bed, and the English troops pretended to be sulky, but there was joy in the hearts of all the subalterns, and whispers ran up and down the line: "No ball cartridge—what a beastly shame!" "D'you think the beggars will really stand up to us?" "Hope I shall meet my money-lender there. I owe him more than I can afford." "Oh, they won't let us even

unsheath swords." "Hurrah! Up goes the fourth rocket. Fall in, there!"

The garrison artillery, who to the last cherished a wild hope that they might be allowed to bombard the city at a hundred yards' range, lined the parapet above the east gateway and cheered themselves hoarse as the British infantry doubled along the road to the main gate of the city. The cavalry cantered on to the Padshahi Gate, and the native infantry marched slowly to the Gate of the Butchers. The surprise was intended to be of a distinctly unpleasant nature, and to come on top of the defeat of the police who had been just able to keep the Mohammedans from firing the houses of a few leading Hindoos. The bulk of the riot lay in the north and northwest wards. The east and southeast were by this time dark and silent, and I rode hastily to Lalun's house, for I wished to tell her to send some one in search of Wali Dad. The house was unlighted, but the door was open, and I climbed upstairs in the darkness. One small lamp in the white room showed Lalun and her maid leaning half out of the window, breathing heavily and evidently pulling at something that refused to come.

"Thou art late—very late," gasped Lalun without turning her head. "Help us now, oh fool, if thou hast not spent thy strength howling among the *tazias*. Pull! Nasiban and I can do no more! Oh, sahib, is it you? The Hindoos have been hunting an old Mohammedan round the ditch with clubs. If they find him again they will kill him. Help us to pull him up."

I laid my hands to the long red silk waist-cloth that was hanging out of the window, and we three pulled and pulled with all the strength at our command. There was something very heavy at the end, and it was swearing in an unknown tongue as it kicked against the city wall.

"Pull, oh, pull!" said Lalun at the last. A pair of brown hands grasped the window-sill and a venerable Mohammedan tumbled upon the floor, very much out of breath. His jaws

were tied up, and his turban had fallen over one eye. He was dusty and angry.

Lalun hid her face in her hands for an instant and said something about Wali Dad that I could not catch.

Then, to my extreme gratification, she threw her arms round my neck and murmured pretty things. I was in no haste to stop her; and Nasiban, being a handmaiden of tact, turned to the big jewel-chest that stands in the corner of the white room and rummaged among the contents. The Mohammedan sat on the floor and glared.

"One service more, sahib, since thou hast come so opportunely," said Lalun. "Wilt thou"—it is very nice to be thou-ed by Lalun—"take this old man across the city—the troops are everywhere, and they might hurt him, for he is old—to the Kumharsen Gate? There I think he may find a carriage to take him to his house. He is a friend of mine, and thou art—more than a friend . . . therefore I ask this."

Nasiban bent over the old man, tucked something into his belt, and I raised him up and led him into the streets. In crossing from the east to the west of the city there was no chance of avoiding the troops and the crowd. Long before I reached the gully of horsemen I heard the shouts of the British infantry crying cheerily: "Hutt, ye beggars! Hutt, ye devils! Get along! Go forward, there!" Then followed the ringing of rifle-butts and shrieks of pain. The troops were banging the bare toes of the mob with their butts—not a bayonet had been fixed. My companion mumbled and jabbered as we walked on until we were carried back by the crowd and had to force our way to the troops. I caught him by the wrist and felt a bangle thereon—the iron bangle of the Sikhs—but I had no suspicions, for Lalun had only ten minutes before put her arms around me. Thrice we were carried back by the crowd, and when we won our way past the British infantry it was to meet the Sikh cavalry driving another mob before them with the butts of their lances.

"What are these dogs?" said the old man.

"Sikhs of the cavalry, father," I said, and we edged our way up the line of horses two abreast and found the deputy commissioner, his helmet smashed on his head, surrounded by a knot of men who had come down from the club as amateur constables and had helped the police mightily.

"We'll keep 'em on the run till dawn," said Petitt. "Who's your villainous friend?"

I had only time to say, "The protection of the Sirkar!" when a fresh crowd flying before the native infantry carried us a hundred yards nearer to the Kumharsen Gate, and Petitt was swept away like a shadow.

"I do not know—I cannot see—it is all new to me!" moaned my companion. "How many troops are there in the city?"

"Perhaps five hundred," I said.

"A lakh of men beaten by five hundred—and Sikhs among them! Surely, surely, I am an old man, but—the Kumharsen Gate is new. Who pulled down the stone lions? Where is the conduit? Sahib, I am a very old man, and, alas! I—I cannot stand." He dropped in the shadow of the Kumharsen Gate where there was no disturbance. A fat gentleman wearing gold pince-nez came out of the darkness.

"You are most kind to bring my old friend," he said, suavely. "He is a landholder of Akala. He should not be in a big city when there is religious excitement. But I have a carriage here. You are quite truly kind. Will you help me to put him into the carriage? It is very late."

We bundled the old man into a hired victoria that stood close to the gate, and I turned back to the house on the city wall. The troops were driving the people to and fro, while the police shouted, "To your houses! Get to your houses!" and the dog-whip of the assistant district superintendent cracked remorselessly. Terror-stricken *bunnias* clung to the stirrups of the cavalry, crying that their houses had been robbed (which was a lie), and the burly Sikh horsemen patted them on the shoulder and bade them return to those houses lest a worse thing should happen. Parties of five or

six British soldiers, joining arms, swept down the side-gullies, their rifles on their backs, stamping, with shouting and song, upon the toes of Hindoo and Mussulman. Never was religious enthusiasm more systematically squashed; and never were poor breakers of the peace more utterly weary and footsore. They were routed out of holes and corners, from behind well-pillars and byres, and bidden to go to their houses. If they had no houses to go to, so much the worse for their toes.

On returning to Lalun's door I stumbled over a man at the threshold. He was sobbing hysterically and his arms flapped like the wings of a goose. It was Wali Dad, agnostic and unbeliever, shoeless, turbanless, and frothing at the mouth, the flesh on his chest bruised and bleeding from the vehemence with which he had smitten himself. A broken torch-handle lay by his side, and his quivering lips murmured, "*Ya Hasan! Ya Hussain!*" as I stooped over him. I pushed him a few steps up the staircase, threw a pebble at Lalun's city window, and hurried home.

Most of the streets were very still, and the cold wind that comes before the dawn whistled down them. In the center of the square of the mosque a man was bending over a corpse. The skull had been smashed in by gun butt or bamboo stave.

"It is expedient that one man should die for the people," said Petitt, grimly, raising the shapeless head. "These brutes were beginning to show their teeth too much."

And from afar we could hear the soldiers singing:

"Two Lovely Black Eyes," as they drove the remnant of the rioters within doors.

. . . . . .

Of course you can guess what happened? I was not so clever. When the news went abroad that Khem Singh had escaped from the fort, I did not, since I was then living the story, not writing it, connect myself, or Lalun, or the fat gentleman of the gold pince-nez, with his disappearance. Nor did it strike me that Wali Dad was the man who should have steered him across the city, or that Lalun's arms round

my neck were put there to hide the money that Nasiban gave to him, and that Lalun had used me and my white face as even a better safeguard than Wali Dad, who proved himself so untrustworthy. All that I knew at the time was that, when Fort Amara was taken up with the riots, Khem Singh profited by the confusion to get away, and that his two Sikh guards also escaped.

But later on I received full enlightenment; and so did Khem Singh. He fled to those who knew him in the old days, but many of them were dead and more were changed, and all knew something of the wrath of the government. He went to the young men, but the glamour of his name had passed away, and they were entering native regiments or government offices, and Khem Singh could give them neither pension, decorations, nor influence—nothing but a glorious death with their backs to the mouth of a gun. He wrote letters and made promises, and the letters fell into bad hands, and a wholly insignificant subordinate officer of police tracked them down and gained promotion thereby. Moreover, Khem Singh was old, and anise-seed brandy was scarce, and he had left his silver cooking-pots in Fort Amara with his nice warm bedding, and the gentleman with the gold pince-nez was told by those who had employed him that Khem Singh as a popular leader was not worth the money paid.

"Great is the mercy of these fools of English," said Khem Singh when the situation was explained. "I will go back to Fort Amara of my own free will and gain honor. Give me good clothes to return in."

So, upon a day, Khem Singh knocked at the wicket gate of the fort and walked to the captain and the subaltern, who were nearly gray-headed on account of correspondence that daily arrived from Simla marked "Private."

"I have come back, Captain Sahib," said Khem Singh. "Put no more guards over me. It is no good out yonder."

A week later I saw him for the first time to my knowledge, and he made as though there were an understanding between us.

"It was well done, sahib," said he, "and greatly I admired your astuteness in thus boldly facing the troops when I, whom they would have doubtless torn to pieces, was with you. Now there is a man in Fort Ooltagarh whom a bold man could with ease help to escape. This is the position of the fort as I draw it on the sand . . ."

But I was thinking how I had become Lalun's vizier after all.

THE

STORY OF THE GADSBYS

PREFACE

TO THE ADDRESS OF

CAPTAIN J. MAFFLIN,

Duke of Derry's (*Pink*) *Hussars.*

DEAR MAFFLIN—You will remember that I wrote this story as an Awful Warning. None the less you have seen fit to disregard it and have followed Gadsby's example—as I betted you would. I acknowledge that you paid the money at once, but you have prejudiced the mind of Mrs. Mafflin against myself, for though I am almost the only respectable friend of your bachelor days, she has been *darwaza band* to me throughout the season. Further, she caused you to invite me to dinner at the club, where you called me "a wild ass of the desert," and went home at half-past ten, after discoursing for twenty minutes on the responsibilities of housekeeping. You now drive a mail-phaeton and sit under a Church of England clergyman. I am not angry, Jack. It is your *kismet*, as it was Gaddy's, and his *kismet* who can avoid? Do not think that I am moved by a spirit of revenge

as I write, thus publicly, that you and you alone are responsible for this book. In other and more expansive days, when you could look at a magnum without flushing and at a cheroot without turning white, you supplied me with most of the material. Take it back again—would that I could have preserved your fetterless speech in the telling—take it back, and by your slippered hearth read it to the late Miss Deercourt. She will not be any the more willing to receive my cards, but she will admire you immensely, and you, I feel sure, will love me. You may even invite me to another very bad dinner—at the club, which, as you and your wife know, is a safe neutral ground for the entertainment of wild asses. Then, my very dear hypocrite, we shall be quits.

Yours always,

RUDYARD KIPLING.

P.S.—On second thoughts I should recommend you to keep the book away from Mrs. Mafflin.

POOR DEAR MAMMA

The wild hawk to the wind-swept sky,
The deer to the wholesome wold,
And the heart of a man to the heart of a maid,
As it was in the days of old.—*Gypsy Song*

SCENE.—*Interior of Miss Minnie Threegan's bedroom at Simla. Miss Threegan, in window-seat, turning over a drawerful of chiffons. Miss Emma Deercourt, bosom friend, who has come to spend the day, sitting on the bed, manipulating the bodice of a ballroom frock and a bunch of artificial lilies of the valley. Time,* 5:30 P.M. *on a hot May afternoon*

Miss Deercourt.—And *he* said: "I shall *never* forget this dance," and, of course, I said: "Oh! How *can* you be so silly!" Do you think he meant anything, dear?

Miss Threegan.—(Extracting long lavender silk stocking from the rubbish.) You know him better than *I* do.

Miss D.—Oh, *do* be sympathetic, Minnie! I'm *sure* he does. At least I *would* be sure if he wasn't always riding with that odious Mrs. Hagan.

Miss T.—I suppose so. How *does* one manage to dance through one's heels first? Look at this—isn't it shameful? (Spreads stocking-heel on open hand for inspection.)

Miss D.—Never mind that! You can't mend it. Help me with this hateful bodice. I've run the string *so*, and I've run the string *so*, and I *can't* make the fullness come right. Where would you put this? (Waves lilies of the valley.)

Miss T.—As high up on the shoulder as possible.

Miss D.—Am I quite tall enough? I know it makes May Olger look lopsided.

Miss T.—Yes, but May hasn't your shoulders. Hers are like a hock-bottle.

Bearer.—(Rapping at door.) Captain Sahib *aya*.

Miss D.—(Jumping up wildly, and hunting for body, which she has discarded owing to the heat of the day.) Captain Sahib! What Captain Sahib? Oh, good gracious, and I'm only half dressed! Well, I shan't bother.

Miss T.—(Calmly.) You needn't. It isn't for us. That's Captain Gadsby. He is going for a ride with Mamma. He generally comes five days out of the seven.

Agonized Voice.—(From an inner apartment.) Minnie, run out and give Captain Gadsby some tea, and tell him I shall be ready in ten minutes; and oh, Minnie, come to me an instant, there's a dear girl!

Miss T.—Oh, bother! (Aloud.) Very well, Mamma.

[Exit, and reappears, after five minutes, flushed, and rubbing her fingers.

Miss D.—You look pink. What has happened?

Miss T.—(In a stage whisper.) A twenty-four-inch waist, and she won't let it out. Where *are* my bangles?

(Rummages on the toilet-table, and dabs at her hair with a brush in the interval.)

Miss D.—Who is this Captain Gadsby? I don't think I've met him.

Miss T.—You *must* have. He belongs to the Harrar set. I've danced with him, but I've never talked to him. He's a big yellow man, just like a newly hatched chicken, with an e-normous mustache. He walks like this (imitates Cavalry swagger), and he goes "Ha—mmm!" deep down in his throat when he can't think of anything to say. Mamma likes him. I don't.

Miss D.—(Abstractedly.) Does he wax that mustache?

Miss T.—(Busy with powder-puff.) Yes, I think so. Why?

Miss D.—(Bending over the bodice and sewing furiously.) Oh, nothing—only . . .

Miss T.—(Sternly.) Only what? Out with it, Emma.

Miss D.—Well, May Olger—she's engaged to Mr. Charteris, you know—said . . . Promise you won't repeat this?

Miss T.—Yes, I promise. What did she say?

Miss D.—That—that being kissed (with a rush) by a man who *didn't* wax his mustache was—like eating an egg without salt.

Miss T.—(At her full height, with crushing scorn.) May Olger is a horrid, nasty *Thing*, and you can tell her I said so. I'm glad she doesn't belong to my set . . . I must go and feed this *man!* Do I look presentable?

Miss D.—Yes, perfectly. Be quick and hand him over to your Mother, and then we can talk. *I* shall listen at the door to hear what you say to him.

Miss T.—'Sure I don't care. *I'm* not afraid of Captain Gadsby.

[In proof of this swings into drawing-room with a mannish stride followed by two short steps, which produces the effect of a restive horse entering. Misses Captain Gadsby, who is sitting in the shadow of the window-curtain, and gazes round helplessly.

Captain Gadsby.—(Aside.) The filly, by Jove! Must ha' picked up that action from the sire. (Aloud, rising.) Good-evening, Miss Threegan.

Miss T.—(Conscious that she is flushing.) Good-evening, Captain Gadsby. Mamma told me to say that she will be ready in a few minutes. Won't you have some tea? (Aside.) I hope Mamma will be quick. What *am* I to say to the creature? (Aloud and abruptly.) Milk and sugar?

Capt. G.—No sugar, tha-anks, and very little milk. Ha-Hmmm.

Miss T.—(Aside.) If he's going to do that, I'm lost. I shall laugh. I *know* I shall.

Capt. G.—(Pulling at his mustache and watching it sidewise down his nose.) Ha-Hmmm. (Aside.) 'Wonder what the little beast can talk about. 'Must make a shot at it.

Miss T.—(Aside.) Oh, this is agonizing. I *must* say something.

Both Together.—Have you been . . .

Capt. G.—I beg your pardon. You were going to say . . .

Miss T.—(Who has been watching the mustache with awed fascination.) Won't you have some eggs?

Capt. G.—(Looking bewilderedly at the tea-table.) Eggs! (Aside.) Oh, Hades! She must have a nursery-tea at this hour. S'pose they've wiped her mouth and sent her to me while the Mother is getting on her duds. (Aloud.) No, thanks.

Miss T.—(Crimson with confusion.) Oh! I didn't mean that. I wasn't thinking of mu—eggs for an instant. I mean *salt*. Won't you have some sa—sweets? (Aside.) He'll think me a raving lunatic. I wish Mamma would come.

Capt. G.—(Aside.) It *was* a nursery-tea and she's ashamed of it. By Jove! She doesn't look half bad when she colors up like that. (Aloud, helping himself from the dish.) Have you seen those new chocolates at Peliti's?

Miss T.—No, I made these myself. What are they like?

Capt. G.—These? *De*-licious. (Aside.) And that's a fact.

Miss T.—(Aside.) Oh, bother! He'll think I'm fishing for compliments. (Aloud.) No, Peliti's, of course.

Capt. G.—(Enthusiastically.) Not to compare with these. How d'you make them? I can't get my *khansamah* to understand the simplest thing beyond mutton and *murghi*.

Miss T.—Yes? I'm not a *khansamah*, you know. Perhaps you frighten him. You should never frighten a servant. He loses his head. It's very bad policy.

Capt. G.—He's so awf'ly stupid.

Miss T.—(Folding her hands in her lap.) You should call him quietly and say: "Oh, *khansamah jee!*"

Capt. G.—(Getting interested.) Yes? (Aside.) Fancy that little featherweight saying, "Oh, *khansamah jee*" to my bloodthirsty Mir Khan!

Miss T.—Then you should explain the dinner, dish by dish.

Capt. G.—But I can't speak the vernacular.

Miss T.—(Patronizingly.) You should pass the Higher Standard and try.

Capt. G.—I have, but I don't seem to be any the wiser. Are you?

Miss T.—I never passed the Higher Standard. But the *khansamah* is very patient with me. He doesn't get angry when I talk about sheep's *topees*, or order *maunds* of grain when I mean *seers*.

Capt. G.—(Aside, with intense indignation.) I'd like to see Mir Khan being rude to that girl! Halloo! Steady the Buffs! (Aloud.) And do you understand about horses, too?

Miss T.—A little—not very much. I can't doctor them, but I know what they ought to eat, and I am in charge of our stable.

Capt. G.—Indeed! You might help me then. What ought a man to give his *sais* in the Hills? My ruffian says eight rupees, because everything is so dear.

Miss T.—Six rupees a month, and one rupee Simla allow-

ance—neither more nor less. And a grass-cut gets six rupees. That's better than buying grass in the bazaar.

Capt. G.—(Admiringly.) How do you know?

Miss T.—I have tried both ways.

Capt. G.—Do you ride much, then? I've never seen you on the Mall?

Miss T.—(Aside.) I haven't passed him *more* than fifty times. (Aloud.) Nearly every day.

Capt. G.—By Jove! I didn't know that. Ha-Hmmm! (Pulls at his mustache and is silent for forty seconds.)

Miss T.—(Desperately, and wondering what will happen next.) It looks beautiful. I shouldn't touch it if I were you. (Aside.) It's all Mamma's fault for not coming before. I *will* be rude!

Capt. G.—(Bronzing under the tan, and bringing down his hand very quickly.) Eh! Wha-at! Oh, yes! Ha! Ha! (Laughs uneasily.) (Aside.) Well, of *all* the dashed cheek! I never had a woman say that to me yet. She must be a cool hand or else . . . Ah! that nursery-tea!

Voice from the Unknown.—Tchk! Tchk! Tchk!

Capt. G.—Good gracious! What's that?

Miss T.—The dog, I think. (Aside.) Emma *has* been listening, and I'll never forgive her!

Capt. G.—(Aside.) They don't keep dogs here. (Aloud.) Didn't sound like a dog, did it?

Miss T.—Then it must have been the cat. Let's go into the veranda. What a lovely evening it is!

[Steps into veranda and looks out across the hills into sunset. The Captain follows.

Capt. G.—(Aside.) Superb eyes! I wonder that I never noticed them before! (Aloud.) There's going to be a dance at Viceregal Lodge on Wednesday. Can you spare me one?

Miss T.—(Shortly.) No! I don't want any of your charity-dances. You only ask me because Mamma told you to. I hop and I bump. You *know* I do!

Capt. G.—(Aside.) That's true, but little girls shouldn't

understand these things. (Aloud.) No, on my word, I don't. You dance beautifully.

Miss T.—Then why do you always stand out after half a dozen turns? I thought officers in the Army didn't tell fibs.

Capt. G.—It wasn't a fib, believe me. I really *do* want the pleasure of a dance with you.

Miss T.—(Wickedly.) Why? Won't Mamma dance with you any more?

Capt. G.—(More earnestly than the necessity demands.) I wasn't thinking of your Mother. (Aside.) You little vixen!

Miss T.—(Still looking out of the window.) Eh? Oh, I beg your pardon. I was thinking of something else.

Capt. G.—(Aside.) Well! I wonder what she'll say next. I've never known a woman treat *me* like this before. I might be— Dash it, I might be an Infantry subaltern! (Aloud.) Oh, *please* don't trouble. I'm not worth thinking about. Isn't your Mother ready yet?

Miss T.—I should think so; but promise me, Captain Gadsby, you won't take poor dear Mamma twice round Jakko any more. It tires her so.

Capt. G.—She says that no exercise tires her.

Miss T.—Yes, but she suffers afterward. *You* don't know what rheumatism is, and you oughtn't to keep her out so late, when it gets chilly in the evenings.

Capt. G.—(Aside.) Rheumatism! I *thought* she came off her horse rather in a bunch. Whew! One lives and learns. (Aloud.) I'm sorry to hear that. She hasn't mentioned it to me.

Miss T.—(Flurried.) Of course not! Poor dear Mamma never would. And you mustn't say that I told you either. Promise me that you won't. Oh, Captain Gadsby, *promise* me you won't!

Capt. G.—I am dumb, or—I shall be as soon as you've given me that dance, and another . . . if you can trouble yourself to think about me for a minute.

Miss T.—But you won't like it one little bit. You'll be awfully sorry afterward.

Capt. G.—I shall like it above all things, and I shall only be sorry that I didn't get more. (Aside.) Now what in the world am I saying?

Miss T.—Very well. You will have only yourself to thank if your toes are trodden on. Shall we say Seven?

Capt. G.—And Eleven. (Aside.) She can't be more than eight stone, but, even then, it's an absurdly small foot. (Looks at his own riding-boots.)

Miss T.—They're beautifully shiny. I can almost see my face in them.

Capt. G.—I was thinking whether I should have to go on crutches for the rest of my life if you trod on my toes.

Miss T.—Very likely. Why not change Eleven for a square?

Capt. G.—No, *please!* I want them both waltzes. Won't you write them down?

Miss T.—*I* don't get so many dances that I shall confuse them. *You* will be the offender.

Capt. G.—Wait and see! (Aside.) She doesn't dance perfectly, perhaps, but . . .

Miss. T.—Your tea must have got cold by this time. Won't you have another cup?

Capt. G.—No, thanks. Don't you think it's pleasanter out in the veranda? (Aside.) I never saw hair take that color in the sunshine before. (Aloud.) It's like one of Dicksee's pictures.

Miss T.—Yes! It's a wonderful sunset, isn't it? (Bluntly.) But what do *you* know about Dicksee's pictures!

Capt. G.—I go Home occasionally. And I used to know the Galleries. (Nervously.) You mustn't think me only a Philistine with . . . a mustache.

Miss T.—Don't! *Please* don't! I'm *so* sorry for what I said then. I was *horribly* rude. It slipped out before I thought. Don't you know the temptation to say frightful and shocking things just for the mere sake of saying them? I'm afraid I gave way to it.

Capt. G.—(Watching the girl as she flushes.) I *think* I

know the feeling. It would be terrible if we all yielded to it, wouldn't it? For instance, I might say . . .

Poor dear Mamma.—(Entering, habited, hatted, and booted.) Ah, Captain Gadsby! 'Sorry to keep you waiting. 'Hope you haven't been bored. 'My little girl been talking to you?

Miss T.—(Aside.) I'm not sorry I spoke about the rheumatism. I'm not! I'm NOT! I only wish I'd mentioned the corns too.

Capt. G.—(Aside.) What a shame! I wonder how old she is. It never occurred to me before. (Aloud.) We've been discussing "Shakespeare and the musical glasses" in the veranda.

Miss T.—(Aside.) Nice man! He knows that quotation. He *isn't* a Philistine with a mustache. (Aloud.) Good-by, Captain Gadsby. (Aside.) What a huge hand and *what* a squeeze! I don't suppose he meant it, but he has driven the rings into my fingers.

Poor dear Mamma.—Has Vermilion come round yet? Oh, yes! Captain Gadsby, don't you think that the saddle is too far forward? (They pass into the front veranda.)

Capt. G.—(Aside.) How the dickens should I know what she prefers? She told me that she doted on horses. (Aloud.) I think it is.

Miss T.—(Coming out into front veranda.) Oh! Bad Buldoo! I must speak to him for this. He has taken up the curb two links, and Vermilion hates that. (Passes out and to horse's head.)

Capt. G.—Let me do it!

Miss T.—No, Vermilion understands me. Don't you, old man? (Looses curb-chain skillfully, and pats horse on nose and throttle.) Poor Vermilion! *Did* they want to cut his chin off? There!

[Captain Gadsby watches the interlude with undisguised admiration.

Poor dear Mamma.—(Tartly to Miss T.) You've forgotten your guest, I think, dear.

Miss T.—Good gracious! So I have! Good-by! (Retreats in-doors hastily.)

Poor dear Mamma.—(Bunching reins in fingers hampered by too tight gauntlets.) Captain Gadsby!

[Capt. Gadsby stoops and makes the foot-rest. Poor dear Mamma blunders, halts too long, and breaks through it.

Capt. G.—(Aside.) Can't hold up eleven stone forever. It's all your rheumatism. (Aloud.) Can't imagine why I was so clumsy. (Aside.) Now Little Featherweight would have gone up like a bird.

[They ride out of the garden. The Captain falls back.

Capt. G.—(Aside.) How that habit catches her under the arms! Ugh!

Poor dear Mamma.—(With the worn smile of sixteen seasons, the worse for exchange.) You're dull this afternoon, Captain Gadsby.

Capt. G.—(Spurring up wearily.) Why did you keep me waiting so long?

[Et cetera, et cetera, et cetera.

(AN INTERVAL OF THREE WEEKS)

Gilded Youth.—(Sitting on railings opposite Town Hall.) Halloo, Gaddy! 'Been trotting out the Gorgonzola? We all thought it was the Gorgon you're mashing.

Capt. G.—(With withering emphasis.) You young cub! What the —— does it matter to you?

[Proceeds to read Gilded Youth a lecture on discretion and deportment, which crumples latter like a Chinese Lantern. Departs fuming.

(FURTHER INTERVAL OF FIVE WEEKS)

SCENE.—*Exterior of New Library on a foggy evening. Miss Threegan and Miss Deercourt meet among the 'rickshaws. Miss T. is carrying a bundle of books under her left arm*

Miss D.—(Level intonation.) Well?

Miss T.—(Ascending intonation.) Well?

Miss D.—(Capturing her friend's left arm, taking away all the books, placing books in 'rickshaw, returning to arm, securing hand by the third finger and investigating.) Well! You *bad* girl! And you *never* told me.

Miss T.—(Demurely.) He—he—he only spoke yesterday afternoon.

Miss D.—Bless you, dear! And I'm to be bridemaid, aren't I? You *know* you promised *ever* so long ago.

Miss T.—Of course. I'll tell you all about it to-morrow. (Gets into 'rickshaw.) Oh, Emma!

Miss D.—(With intense interest.) Yes, dear?

Miss T.—(Piano.) It's quite true . . . about . . . the . . . egg.

Miss D.—What egg?

Miss T.—(Pianissimo prestissimo.) The egg without salt. (Forte.) *Chalo ghar ko jaldi, jhampani!*

CURTAIN.

THE WORLD WITHOUT

"Certain people of importance"

SCENE.—*Smoking-room of the Degchi Club. Time*, 10:30 P.M. *of a stuffy night in the Rains. Four men dispersed in picturesque attitudes and easy-chairs. To these enter Blayne of the Irregular Moguls, in evening dress*

Blayne.—Phew! The judge ought to be hanged in his own store-godown. Hi, *khitmatgar! Poora* whisky-peg, to take the taste out of my mouth.

Curtiss.—(Royal Artillery.) That's it, is it? What the deuce made you dine at the Judge's? You know his *bandobust.*

Blayne.—'Thought it couldn't be worse than the club; but I'll swear he buys ullaged liquor and doctors it with gin

and ink (looking round the room). Is this all of you to-night?

Doone.—(P. W. D.) Anthony was called out at dinner. Mingle had a pain in his tummy.

Curtiss.—Miggy dies of cholera once a week in the Rains, and gets drunk on chlorodyne in between. 'Good little chap, though. Any one at the Judge's, Blayne?

Blayne.—Cockley and his *memsahib* looking awfully white and fagged. 'Female girl—couldn't catch the name—on her way to the Hills, under the Cockleys' charge—The Judge, and Markyn fresh from Simla—disgustingly fit.

Curtiss.—Good Lord, how truly magnificent! Was there enough ice? When I mangled garbage there I got one whole lump—nearly as big as a walnut. What has Markyn to say for himself?

Blayne.—'Seems that every one is having a fairly good time up there in spite of the rain. By Jove, that reminds me! I know I hadn't come across just for the pleasure of your society. News! Great news! Markyn told me.

Doone.—Who's dead now?

Blayne.—No one that I know of; but Gaddy's hooked at last!

Dropping Chorus.—How much? The Devil! Markyn was pulling your leg. Not Gaddy!

Blayne.—"Yea, verily, verily, verily! Verily, verily, I say unto thee." Theodore, the gift o' God! Our Phillup! It's been given out above.

Mackesy.—(Barrister-at-Law.) Huh! Women will give out anything. What does accused say?

Blayne.—Markyn told me that he congratulated him warily—one hand held out, t'other ready to guard. Gaddy turned pink and said it was so.

Curtiss.—Poor old Gaddy! They'll all do it. Who's *she?* Let's hear the details.

Blayne.—She's a girl—daughter of a Colonel Somebody.

Doone.—Simla's stiff with Colonels' daughters. Be more explicit.

Blayne.—Wait a shake. What *was* her name? Three—something. Three—

Curtiss.—Stars, perhaps. Gaddy knows that brand.

Blayne.—Threegan—Minnie Threegan.

Mackesy.—Threegan! Isn't she a little bit of a girl with red hair?

Blayne.—'Bout that—from what Markyn said.

Mackesy.—Then I've met her. She was at Lucknow last season. 'Owned a permanently juvenile Mamma, and danced damnably. I say, Jervoise, you knew the Threegans, didn't you?

Jervoise.—(Civilian of twenty-five years' service, waking up from his doze.) Eh! What's that? Knew who? How? I thought I was at Home, confound you!

Mackesy.—The Threegan girl's engaged, so Blayne says.

Jervoise. — (Slowly.) Engaged — engaged! Bless my soul! I'm getting an old man! Little Minnie Threegan engaged! It was only the other day I went home with them in the "Surat"—no, the "Massilia"—and she was crawling about on her hands and knees among the *ayahs*. 'Used to call me the "*Tick Tack Sahib*" because I showed her my watch. And that was in Sixty-Seven—no, Seventy. Good God, how time flies! I'm an old man. I remember when Threegan married Miss Derwent—daughter of old Hooky Derwent—but that was before your time. And so the little baby's engaged to have a little baby of her own! Who's the other fool?

Mackesy.—Gadsby of the Pink Hussars.

Jervoise.—'Never met him. Threegan lived in debt, married in debt, and'll die in debt. 'Must be glad to get the girl off his hands.

Blayne. — Gaddy has money — lucky devil. Place at Home, too.

Doone.—He comes of first-class stock. 'Can't quite understand his being caught by a Colonel's daughter, and (looking cautiously round room) Black Infantry at that! No offense to you, Blayne.

Blayne.—(Stiffly.) Not much, tha-anks.

Curtiss.—(Quoting motto of Irregular Moguls.) "We are what we are," eh, old man? But Gaddy was such a superior animal as a rule. Why didn't he go Home and pick his wife there?

Mackesy.—They are all alike when they come to turn into the straight. About thirty a man begins to get sick of living alone—

Curtiss.—And of the eternal muttony-chap in the morning.

Doone.—It's dead goat as a rule; but go on, Mackesy.

Mackesy.—If a man's once taken that way nothing will hold him. Do you remember Benoit of your service, Doone? They transferred him to Tharanda when his time came, and he married a plate-layer's daughter, or something of that kind. She was the only female about the place.

Doone.—Yes, poor brute. That smashed Benoit's chances altogether. Mrs. Benoit used to ask, "Was you goin' to the dance this evenin'?"

Curtiss.—Hang it all! Gaddy hasn't married beneath him. There's no tar-brush in the family, I suppose.

Jervoise.—Tar-brush! Not an anna. You young fellows talk as though the man was doing the girl an honor in marrying her. You're all too conceited—nothing's good enough for you.

Blayne.—Not even an empty Club, a dam' bad dinner at the Judge's, and a Station as sickly as a hospital. You're quite right. We're a set of Sybarites.

Doone.—Luxurious dogs, wallowing in—

Curtiss.—Prickly heat between the shoulders. I'm covered with it. Let's hope Beora will be cooler.

Blayne.—Whew! Are *you* ordered into camp, too? I thought the Gunners had a clean sheet.

Curtiss.—No, worse luck. Two cases yesterday—one died—and if we have a third, out we go. Is there any shooting at Beora, Doone?

Doone.—The country's under water, except the patch by the Grand Trunk Road. I was there yesterday, looking at

a *bund*, and came across four poor devils in their last stage. It's rather bad from here to Kuchara.

Curtiss.—Then we're pretty certain to have a heavy go of it. Heigho! I shouldn't mind changing places with Gaddy for a while. 'Sport with Amaryllis in the shade of the Town Hall, and all that. Oh, why doesn't somebody come and marry me, instead of letting me go into cholera camp?

Mackesy.—(Pointing to notice forbidding dogs in the Club.) Ask the Committee.

Curtiss.—You irreclaimable ruffian! You'll stand me another peg for that. Blayne, what will you take? Mackesy is fined on moral grounds. Doone, have you any preference?

Doone.—Small glass Kummel, please. Excellent carminative, these days. Anthony told me so.

Mackesy.—(Signing voucher for four drinks.) Most unfair punishment. I only thought of Curtiss as Actæon being chivied round the billiard-tables by the nymphs of Diana.

Blayne.—Curtiss would have to import his nymphs by train. Mrs. Cockley's the only woman in the Station. She won't leave Cockley, and he's doing his best to get her to go.

Curtiss.—Good, indeed! Here's Mrs. Cockley's health. To the only wife in the Station and a damned brave woman!

Omnes.—(Drinking.) A damned brave woman!

Blayne.—I suppose Gaddy will bring his wife here at the end of the cold weather. They are going to be married almost immediately, I believe.

Curtiss.—Gaddy may thank his luck that the Pink Hussars are all detachment and no headquarters this hot weather, or he'd be torn from the arms of his love as sure as death. Have you ever noticed the thorough-minded way British Cavalry take to cholera? It's because they are so expensive. If the Pinks had stood fast here, they would have been out in camp a month ago. Yes, I should decidedly like to be Gaddy.

Mackesy.—He'll go Home after he's married, and send in his papers—see if he doesn't.

Blayne.—Why shouldn't he? Hasn't he money? Would any one of us be here if we weren't paupers?

Doone.—Poor old pauper! What has become of the six hundred you rooked from our table last month?

Blayne.—It took unto itself wings. I think an enterprising tradesman got some of it, and a *shroff* gobbled the rest —or else I spent it.

Curtiss.—Gaddy never had dealings with a *shroff* in his life.

Doone.—Virtuous Gaddy! If *I* had three thousand a month, paid from England, I don't think I'd deal with a *shroff* either.

Mackesy.—(Yawning.) Oh, it's a sweet life! I wonder whether matrimony would make it sweeter?

Curtiss.—Ask Cockley—with his wife dying by inches!

Blayne.—Go home and get a fool of a girl to come out to —what is it Thackeray says?—"the splendid palace of an Indian pro-consul."

Doone.—Which reminds me. My quarters leak like a sieve. I had fever last night from sleeping in a swamp. And the worst of it is, one can't do anything to a roof till the Rains are over.

Curtiss.—What's wrong with you? *You* haven't eighty rotting Tommies to take into a running stream.

Doone.—No; but I'm a compost of boils and bad language. I'm a regular Job all over my body. It's sheer poverty of blood, and I don't see any chance of getting richer —either way.

Blayne.—Can't you take leave?

Doone.—That's the pull you Army men have over us. Ten days are nothing in your sight. *I'm* so important that Government can't find a substitute if I go away. Ye-es, I'd like to be Gaddy, whoever his wife may be.

Curtiss.—You've passed the turn of life that Mackesy was speaking of.

Doone.—Indeed I have, but I never yet had the brutality to ask a woman to share my life out here.

Blayne.—On my soul I believe you're right. I'm thinking of Mrs. Cockley. The woman's an absolute wreck.

Doone.—Exactly. Because she stays down here. The only way to keep her fit would be to send her to the Hills for eight months—and the same with any woman. I fancy I see myself taking a wife on those terms.

Mackesy.—With the rupee at one and sixpence. The little Doones would be little Dehra Doones, with a fine Mussoorie *chi-chi* to bring home for the holidays.

Curtiss.—And a pair of be-ewtiful *sambhur*-horns for Doone to wear, free of expense, presented by—

Doone.—Yes, it's an enchanting prospect. By the way, the rupee hasn't done falling yet. The time will come when we shall think ourselves lucky if we only lose half our pay.

Curtiss.—Surely a third's loss enough. Who gains by the arrangement? That's what I want to know.

Blayne.—The Silver Question! I'm going to bed if you begin squabbling. Thank Goodness, here's Anthony—looking like a ghost.

[Enter Anthony, Indian Medical Staff, very white and tired.

Anthony.—'Evening, Blayne. It's raining in sheets. *Peg lao, khitmatgar.* The roads are something ghastly.

Curtiss.—How's Mingle?

Anthony.—Very bad, and more frightened. I handed him over to Fewton. Mingle might just as well have called him in the first place, instead of bothering me.

Blayne.—He's a nervous little chap. What has he got, this time?

Anthony.—'Can't quite say. A very bad tummy and a blue funk so far. He asked me at once if it was cholera, and I told him not to be a fool. That soothed him.

Curtiss.—Poor devil! The funk does half the business in a man of that build.

Anthony.—(Lighting a cheroot.) I firmly believe the

funk will kill him if he stays down. You know the amount of trouble he's been giving Fewton for the last three weeks. He's doing his very best to frighten himself into the grave.

General Chorus.—Poor little devil! Why doesn't he get away?

Anthony.—'Can't. He has his leave all right, but he's so dipped he can't take it, and I don't think his name on paper would raise four annas. That's in confidence, though.

Mackesy.—All the Station knows it.

Anthony.—"I suppose I shall have to die here," he said, squirming all across the bed. He's quite made up his mind to Kingdom Come. And I *know* he has nothing more than a wet-weather tummy if he could only keep a hand on himself.

Blayne.—That's bad. That's *very* bad. Poor little Miggy. Good little chap, too. I say . . .

Anthony.—What do you say?

Blayne.—Well, look here—anyhow. If it's like that—as you say—I say fifty.

Curtiss.—I say fifty.

Mackesy.—I go twenty better.

Doone.—Bloated Crœsus of the Bar! I say fifty. Jervoise, what do you say? Hi! Wake up!

Jervoise.—Eh! What's that? What's that?

Curtiss.—We want a hundred dibs from you. You're a bachelor drawing a gigantic income, and there's a man in a hole.

Jervoise.—What man? Any one dead?

Blayne.—No, but he'll die if you don't give the hundred. Here! Here's a peg-voucher. You can see what we've signed for, and a *chaprassi* will come round to-morrow to collect it. So there will be no trouble.

Jervoise.—(Signing.) One hundred, E. M. J. There you are (feebly). It isn't one of your jokes, is it?

Blayne.—No, it really *is* wanted. Anthony, you were the biggest poker-winner last week and you've defrauded the tax-collector too long. Sign!

Anthony.—Let's see. Three fifties and a seventy—two twenty—three twenty—say four twenty. That'll give him a month clear at the Hills. Many thanks, you men. I'll send round the *chaprassi* to-morrow.

Curtiss.—You must engineer his taking the stuff, and of course you mustn't—

Anthony.—*Of* course. It would never do. He'd weep with gratitude over his evening drink.

Blayne.—That's just what he would do, damn him. Oh! I say, Anthony, you pretend to know everything. Have you heard about Gaddy?

Anthony.—No. Divorce Court at last?

Blayne.—Worse. He's engaged.

Anthony.—How much? He *can't* be!

Blayne.—He *is*. He's going to be married in a few weeks. Markyn told me at the Judge's this evening. It's *pukka*.

Anthony.—You don't say so? Holy Moses! There'll be a shine in the tents of Kedar.

Curtiss.—'Regiment cut up rough, think you?

Anthony.—'Don't know anything about the Regiment.

Mackesy.—It is bigamy, then?

Anthony.—May be. Do you mean to say that you men have forgotten, or is there more charity in the world than I thought?

Doone.—You don't look pretty when you are trying to keep a secret. You bloat. Explain.

Anthony.—Mrs. Herriott!

Blayne.—(After a long pause, to the room generally.) It's my notion that we are a set of fools.

Mackesy.—Nonsense. *That* business was knocked on the head last season. Why, young Mallard—

Anthony.—Mallard was a candlestick, paraded as such. Think a while. Recollect last season and the talk then. Mallard or no Mallard, did Gaddy ever talk to any other woman?

Curtiss.—There's something in that. It *was* slightly no-

ticeable now you come to mention it. But she's at Naini Tal, and he's at Simla.

Anthony.—He had to go to Simla to look after a globe-trotter relative of his—a person with a title. Uncle or aunt.

Blayne.—And there he got engaged. No law prevents a man growing tired of a woman.

Anthony.—Except that he mustn't do it till the woman is tired of him. And the Herriott woman was not that.

Curtiss.—She may be now. Two months of Naini Tal work wonders.

Doone.—Curious thing how some women carry a Fate with them. There was a Mrs. Deegie in the Central Provinces whose men invariably fell away and got married. It became a regular proverb with us when I was down there. I remember three men desperately devoted to her, and they all, one after another, took wives.

Curtiss.—That's odd. Now I should have thought that Mrs. Deegie's influence would have led them to take other men's wives. It ought to have made them afraid of the judgment of Providence.

Anthony.—Mrs. Herriott will make Gaddy afraid of something more than the judgment of Providence, I fancy.

Blayne.—Supposing things are as you say, he'll be a fool to face her. He'll sit tight at Simla.

Anthony.—'Shouldn't be a bit surprised if he went off to Naini to explain. He's an unaccountable sort of man, and she's likely to be a more than unaccountable woman.

Doone.—What makes you take her character away so confidently?

Anthony.—*Primum tempus.* Gaddy was her first, and a woman doesn't allow her first man to drop away without expostulation. She justifies the first transfer of affection to herself by swearing that it is forever and ever. Consequently . . .

Blayne.—Consequently, we are sitting here till past one o'clock, talking scandal like a set of Station cats. Anthony,

it's all your fault. We were perfectly respectable till you came in. Go to bed. I'm off. Good-night all.

Curtiss.—Past one! It's past two, by Jove, and here's the *khit* coming for the late charge. Just Heavens! One, two, three, four, *five* rupees to pay for the pleasure of saying that a poor little beast of a woman is no better than she should be. I'm ashamed of myself. Go to bed, you slanderous villains, and if I'm sent to Beora to-morrow, be prepared to hear I'm dead before paying my card-account.

CURTAIN

THE TENTS OF KEDAR

Only why should it be with pain at all,
Why must I 'twixt the leaves of coronal
Put any kiss of pardon on thy brow?
Why should the other women know so much,
And talk together:—Such the look and such
The smile he used to love with, then as now.
—*Any Wife to any Husband*

SCENE.—*A Naini Tal dinner for thirty-four. Plate, wines, crockery, and khitmatgars carefully calculated to scale of Rs.* 6,000 *per mensem, less Exchange. Table split lengthwise by bank of flowers*

Mrs. Herriott.—(After conversation has risen to proper pitch.) Ah! 'Didn't see you in the crush in the drawing-room. (Sotto voce.) Where *have* you been all this while, Pip?

Captain Gadsby.—(Turning from regularly ordained dinner partner and settling hock glasses.) Good-evening. (Sotto voce.) Not quite so loud another time. You've no notion how your voice carries. (Aside.) So much for shirking the written explanation. It'll have to be a verbal one now. Sweet prospect! How on earth am I to tell her that

I am a respectable, engaged member of society, and it's all over between us?

Mrs. H.—I've a heavy score against you. Where were you at the Monday Pop? Where were you on Tuesday? Where were you at the Lamonts' tennis? I was looking everywhere.

Capt. G.—For me! Oh, I was alive somewhere, I suppose. (Aside.) It's for Minnie's sake, but it's going to be dashed unpleasant.

Mrs. H.—Have I done anything to offend you? I never meant it if I have. I couldn't help going for a ride with the Vaynor man. It was promised a week before you came up.

Capt. G.—I didn't know . . .

Mrs. H.—It really *was*.

Capt. G.—Anything about it, I mean.

Mrs. H.—What has upset you to-day? All these days? You haven't been near me for four whole days—nearly one hundred hours. Was it *kind* of you, Pip? And I've been looking forward so much to your coming.

Capt. G.—Have you?

Mrs. H.—You *know* I have! I've been as foolish as a schoolgirl about it. I made a little calendar and put it in my card-case, and every time the twelve o'clock gun went off I scratched out a square and said, "That brings me nearer to Pip. *My* Pip!"

Capt. G.—(With an uneasy laugh.) What will Mackler think if you neglect him so?

Mrs. H.—And it hasn't brought you nearer. You seem further away than ever. Are you sulking about something? I know your temper.

Capt. G.—No.

Mrs. H.—Have I grown old in the last few months, then? (Reaches forward to bank of flowers for menu-card.)

Partner on Left.—Allow me. (Hands menu-card. Mrs. H. keeps her arm at full stretch for three seconds.)

Mrs. H.—(To partner.) Oh, thanks. I didn't see. (Turns right again.) Is anything in me changed at all?

Capt. G.—For goodness' sake go on with your dinner! You must eat something. Try one of those cutlet arrangements. (Aside.) And I fancied she had good shoulders, once upon a time! What an ass a man can make of himself!

Mrs. H.—(Helping herself to a paper frill, seven pease, some stamped carrots and a spoonful of gravy.) That isn't an answer. Tell me whether I have done anything.

Capt. G.—(Aside.) If it isn't ended here there will be a ghastly scene somewhere else. If only I'd written to her and stood the racket—at long range! (To khitmatgar.) *Han! Simpkin do.* (Aloud.) I'll tell you later on.

Mrs. H.—Tell me *now*. It must be some foolish misunderstanding, and you know that there was to be nothing of that sort between us! *We*, of all people in the world, can't afford it. Is it the Vaynor man, and don't you like to say so? On my honor—

Capt. G.—I haven't given the Vaynor man a thought.

Mrs. H.—But how d'you know that *I* haven't?

Capt. G.—(Aside.) Here's my chance and may the devil help me through with it. (Aloud and measuredly.) Believe me, I do not care how often or how tenderly you think of the Vaynor man.

Mrs. H.—I wonder if you mean that. Oh, what *is* the good of squabbling and pretending to misunderstand when you are only up for so short a time? Pip, don't be stupid!

[Follows a pause, during which he crosses his left leg over his right and continues his dinner.

Capt. G.—(In answer to the thunderstorm in her eyes.) Corns—my worst.

Mrs. H.—Upon my word, you are the very rudest man in the world! I'll *never* do it again.

Capt. G.—(Aside.) No, I don't think you will; but I wonder what you will do before it's all over. (To khitmatgar.) *Thorah our Simpkin do.*

Mrs. H.—Well! Haven't you the grace to apologize, bad man?

Capt. G.—(Aside.) I mustn't let it drift back *now*.

Trust a woman for being as blind as a bat when she won't see.

Mrs. H.—I'm waiting: or would you like me to dictate a form of apology?

Capt. G.—(Desperately.) By all means dictate.

Mrs. H.—(Lightly.) Very well. Rehearse your several Christian names after me and go on: "Profess my sincere repentance."

Capt. G.—"Sincere repentance."

Mrs. H.—"For having behaved . . ."

Capt. G.—(Aside.) At last! I wish to goodness she'd look away. (Aloud.) "For having behaved"—as I have behaved, and declare that I am thoroughly and heartily sick of the whole business, and take this opportunity of making clear my intention of ending it, now, henceforward, and forever. (Aside.) If any one had told me I should be such a blackguard! . . .

Mrs. H.—(Shaking a spoonful of potato-chips into her plate.) That's not a pretty joke.

Capt. G.—No. It's a reality. (Aside.) I wonder if smashes of this kind are always so raw.

Mrs. H.—Really, Pip, you're getting more absurd every day.

Capt. G.—I don't think you quite understand me. Shall I repeat it?

Mrs. H.—No! For pity's sake don't do that. It's too terrible, even in fun.

Capt. G.—(Aside.) I'll let her think it over for a while. But I ought to be horsewhipped.

Mrs. H.—I want to know what you meant by what you said just now.

Capt. G.—Exactly what I said. No less.

Mrs. H.—But what have I done to deserve it? What *have* I done?

Capt. G.—(Aside.) If she only wouldn't look at me. (Aloud and very slowly, his eyes on his plate.) D'you remember that evening in July, before the Rains broke,

when you said that the end would have to come sooner or later . . . and you wondered for which of us it would come first?

Mrs. H.—Yes! I was only joking. And you swore that, as long as there was breath in your body, it should *never* come. And I believed you.

Capt. G.—(Fingering menu-card.) Well, it has. That's all.

[A long pause, during which Mrs. H. bows her head and rolls the bread-twist into little pellets: Capt. G. stares at the oleanders.

Mrs. H.—(Throwing back her head and laughing naturally.) They train us women well, don't they, Pip?

Capt. G.—(Brutally, touching shirt-stud.) So far as the expression goes. (Aside.) It isn't in her nature to take things quietly. There'll be an explosion yet.

Mrs. H.—(With a shudder.) Thank you. B-but red Indians allow people to wriggle when they're being tortured, I believe. (Slips fan from girdle and fans slowly: rim of fan level with chin.)

Partner on Left.—Very close to-night, isn't it? You find it too much for you?

Mrs. H.—Oh, no, not in the least. But they really ought to have punkahs, even in your cool Naini Tal, oughtn't they? (Turns, dropping fan and raising eyebrows.)

Capt. G.—It's all right. (Aside.) Here comes the storm!

Mrs. H.—(Her eyes on the tablecloth: fan ready in right hand.) It was very cleverly managed, Pip, and I congratulate you. You swore—you never contented yourself with merely saying a thing—you *swore* that, as far as lay in your power, you'd make my wretched life pleasant for me. And you've denied me the consolation of breaking down. I should have done it—indeed I should. A woman would hardly have thought of this refinement, my kind, considerate friend. (Fan-guard, as before.) You have explained things so tenderly and truthfully, too! You haven't spoken or

written a word of warning, and you have let me believe in you till the last minute. You haven't condescended to give me your *reason* yet. No! A woman could not have managed it half so well. Are there many *men* like you in the world?

Capt. G.—I'm sure I don't know. (To khitmatgar.) Ohé! *Simpkin do!*

Mrs. H.—You call yourself a man of the world, don't you? Do men of the world behave like devils when they do a woman the honor to get tired of her?

Capt. G.—I'm sure I don't know. Don't speak so loud!

Mrs. H.—Keep us respectable, O Lord, whatever happens! Don't be afraid of my compromising you. You've chosen your ground far too well, and I've been properly brought up. (Lowering fan.) Haven't you *any* pity, Pip, except for yourself?

Capt. G.—Wouldn't it be rather impertinent of me to say that I'm sorry for you?

Mrs. H.—I think you have said it once or twice before. You're growing very careful of my feelings. My God, Pip, I was a good woman once! You *said* I was. You've made me what I am. What are you going to do with me? What are you going to do with me? Won't you *say* that you are sorry? (Helps herself to iced asparagus.)

Capt. G.—I am sorry for you, if you want the pity of such a brute as I am. I'm *awf'ly* sorry for you.

Mrs. H.—Rather tame for a man of the world. Do you think that that admission clears you?

Capt. G.—What can I do? I can only tell you what I think of myself. You can't think worse than that?

Mrs. H.—Oh, yes, I can! And now, will you tell me the reason of all this? Remorse? Has Bayard been suddenly conscience-stricken?

Capt. G.—(Angrily, his eyes still lowered.) No! The thing has come to an end on my side. That's all. *Mafisch!*

Mrs. H.—"That's all. *Mafisch!*" As though I were a

Cairene Dragoman. You used to make prettier speeches. D'you remember when you said . . .

Capt. G.—For Heaven's sake don't bring that back! Call me anything you like and I'll admit it . . .

Mrs. H.—But you don't care to be reminded of old lies? If I could hope to hurt you one-tenth as much as you have hurt me to-night . . . No, I wouldn't—I couldn't do it—liar though you are.

Capt. G.—I've spoken the truth.

Mrs. H.—My *dear* sir, you flatter yourself. You have lied over the reason. Pip, remember that I know you as you don't know yourself. You have been everything to me, though you are . . . (Fan-guard.) Oh, what a contemptible *Thing* it is! And so you are merely tired of me?

Capt. G.—Since you insist upon my repeating it—Yes.

Mrs. H.—Lie the first. I wish I knew a coarser word. Lie seems so ineffectual in your case. The fire has just died out and there is no fresh one? Think for a minute, Pip, if you care whether I despise you more than I do. Simply, *Mafisch*, is it?

Capt. G.—Yes. (Aside.) I think I deserve this.

Mrs. H.—Lie number two. Before the next glass chokes you, tell me her name.

Capt. G.—(Aside.) I'll make her pay for dragging Minnie into the business! (Aloud.) Is it likely?

Mrs. H.—*Very* likely if you thought that it would flatter your vanity. You'd cry my name on the house-tops to make people turn round.

Capt. G.—I wish I had. There would have been an end of this business.

Mrs. H.—Oh, no, there would not . . . And so you were going to be virtuous and *blasé*, were you? To come to me and say: "I've done with you. The incident is clo-osed." I ought to be proud of having kept such a man so long.

Capt. G.—(Aside.) It only remains to pray for the end of the dinner. (Aloud.) You know what I think of myself.

Mrs. H.—As it's the only person in the world you ever *do*

think of, and as I know your mind thoroughly, I do. You want to get it all over and . . . Oh, I can't keep you back! And you're going—think of it, Pip—to throw me over for another woman. And you swore that all other women were . . . Pip, my Pip! She *can't* care for you as I do. Believe me, she can't! Is it any one that I know?

Capt. G.—Thank goodness it isn't. (Aside.) I expected a cyclone, but not an earthquake.

Mrs. H.—She *can't!* Is there anything that I wouldn't do for you—or haven't done? And to think that I should take this trouble over you, knowing what you are! Do you despise me for it?

Capt. G.—(Wiping his mouth to hide a smile.) *Again?* It's entirely a work of charity on your part.

Mrs. H.—Ahhh! But I have no right to resent it . . . Is she better looking than I? Who was it said . . .

Capt. G.—No—not that!

Mrs. H.—I'll be more merciful than you were. Don't you know that all women are alike?

Capt. G.—(Aside.) Then this is the exception that proves the rule.

Mrs. H.—*All* of them! I'll tell you anything you like. I will, upon my word! They only want the admiration—from anybody—no matter who—anybody! But there is always *one* man that they care for more than any one else in the world, and would sacrifice all the others to. Oh, *do* listen! I've kept the Vaynor man trotting after me like a poodle, and he believes that he is the only man I am interested in. I'll tell you what he said to me.

Capt. G.—Spare him. (Aside.) I wonder what *his* version is?

Mrs. H.—He's been waiting for me to look at him all through dinner. Shall I do it, and you can see what an idiot he looks?

Capt. G.—"But what imports the nomination of this gentleman?"

Mrs. H.—Watch! (Sends a glance to the Vaynor man,

who tries vainly to combine a mouthful of ice-pudding, a smirk of self-satisfaction, a glare of intense devotion, and the stolidity of a British dining countenance.)

Capt. G.—(Critically.) He doesn't look pretty. Why didn't you wait till the spoon was out of his mouth?

Mrs. H.—To amuse you. She'll make an exhibition of you as I've made of him; and people will laugh at you. Oh, Pip, can't you *see* that? It's as plain as the noonday sun. You'll be trotted about and told lies, and made a fool of like the others. *I* never made a fool of you, did I?

Capt. G.—(Aside.) What a clever little woman it is!

Mrs. H.—Well, what have you to say?

Capt. G.—I feel better.

Mrs. H.—Yes, I suppose so, after I have come down to your level. I couldn't have done it if I hadn't cared for you so much. I have spoken the truth.

Capt. G.—It doesn't alter the situation.

Mrs. H.—(Passionately.) Then she *has* said that she cares for you! Don't believe her, Pip. It's a lie—as black as yours to me!

Capt. G.—S-s-s-steady! I've a notion that a friend of yours is looking at you.

Mrs. H.—He! I *hate* him. He introduced you to me.

Capt. G.—(Aside.) And some people would like women to assist in making the laws. Introduction to imply condonment. (Aloud.) Well, you see, if you can remember so far back as that, I couldn't, in common politeness, refuse the offer.

Mrs. H.—In common politeness! We have got beyond *that!*

Capt. G.—(Aside.) Old ground means fresh trouble. (Aloud.) On my honor . . .

Mrs. H.—Your *what?* Ha, ha!

Capt. G.—Dishonor, then. She's not what you imagine. I meant to . . .

Mrs. H.—Don't tell me anything about her! She *won't*

care for you, and when you come back, after having made an exhibition of yourself, you'll find me occupied with . . .

Capt. G.—(Insolently.) You couldn't while I am alive. (Aside.) If that doesn't bring her pride to her rescue, nothing will.

Mrs. H.—(Drawing herself up.) Couldn't do it? *I?* (Softening.) You're right. I don't believe I could—though you are what you are—a coward and a liar in grain.

Capt. G.—It doesn't hurt so much after your little lecture—with demonstrations.

Mrs. H.—One mass of vanity! Will nothing *ever* touch you in this life? There must be a Hereafter if it's only for the benefit of . . . But you will have it all to yourself.

Capt. G.—(Under his eyebrows.) Are you so certain of that?

Mrs. H.—I shall have had mine in this life; and it will serve me right.

Capt. G.—But the admiration that you insisted on so strongly a moment ago? (Aside.) Oh, I *am* a brute!

Mrs. H.—(Fiercely.) Will *that* console me for knowing that you will go to her with the same words, the same arguments, and the—the same pet names you used to me? And if she cares for you, you two will laugh over my story. Won't that be punishment heavy enough even for me—even for me? . . . And it's useless. That's another punishment.

Capt. G.—(Feebly.) Oh, come! I'm not so low as you think.

Mrs. H.—Not now, perhaps, but you will be. Oh, Pip, if a woman flatters your vanity, there's nothing on earth that you would not tell her; and no meanness that you would not do. Have I known you so long without knowing that?

Capt. G.—If you can trust me in nothing else—and I don't see why I should be trusted—you can count upon my holding my tongue.

Mrs. H.—If you denied everything you've said this evening and declared it was all in fun (a long pause), I'd trust you. Not otherwise. All I ask is, don't tell her my name.

Please don't. A man might forget: a woman never would. (Looks up table and sees hostess beginning to collect eyes.) So it's all ended, through no fault of mine . . . Haven't I behaved beautifully? I've accepted your dismissal, and you managed it as cruelly as you could, and I have made you respect my sex, haven't I? (Arranging gloves and fan.) I only pray that she'll know you some day as I know you now. I wouldn't be you then, for I think even your conceit will be hurt. I hope she'll pay you back the humiliation you've brought on me. I hope . . . No. I don't. I *can't* give you up! I must have something to look forward to or I shall go crazy. When it's all over, come back to me, come back to me, and you'll find that you're my Pip still!

Capt. G.—(Very clearly.) 'False move, and you pay for it. It's a girl!

Mrs. H.—(Rising.) Then it *was* true! They said . . . but I wouldn't insult you by asking. A girl! *I* was a girl not very long ago. Be good to her, Pip. I daresay she believes in you.

[Goes out with an uncertain smile. He watches her through the door, and settles into a chair as the men redistribute themselves.

Capt. G.—Now, if there is any Power who looks after this world, will He kindly tell me what I have done? (Reaching out for the claret, and half aloud.) What *have* I done?

CURTAIN

WITH ANY AMAZEMENT

And are not afraid with any amazement.—*Marriage Service*

SCENE.—*A bachelor's bedroom—toilet-table arranged with unnatural neatness. Captain Gadsby asleep and snoring heavily. Time* 10:30 A.M.—*a glorious autumn day at Simla. Enter delicately Captain Maffin of Gadsby's regiment. Looks at sleeper, and shakes his head, murmuring "Poor Gaddy." Performs violent fantasia with hair-brushes on chair-back*

Capt. M.—Wake up, my sleeping beauty! (Howls.)

"Uprouse ye, then, my merry, merry men!
It is our opening day!
It is our opening da-ay!"

Gaddy, the little dicky-birds have been billing and cooing for ever so long; and I'm here!

Capt. G.—(Sitting up and yawning.) 'Mornin'. This is awf'ly good of you, old fellow. Most awf'ly good of you. 'Don't know what I should do without you. 'Pon my soul, I don't. 'Haven't slept a wink all night.

Capt. M.—I didn't get in till half-past eleven. 'Had a look at you then, and you seemed to be sleeping as soundly as a condemned criminal.

Capt. G.—Jack, if you want to make those disgustingly worn-out jokes, you'd better go away. (With portentous gravity.) It's the happiest day in my life.

Capt. M.—(Chuckling grimly.) Not by a very long chalk, my son. You're going through some of the most

refined torture you've ever known. But be calm. *I* am with you. 'Shun! *Dress!*

Capt. G.—Eh! Wha-at?

Capt. M.—*Do* you suppose that you are your own master for the next twelve hours? If you *do*, of course . . . (Makes for the door.)

Capt. G.—No! For goodness' sake, old man, don't do that! You'll see me through, won't you? I've been mugging up that beastly drill, and can't remember a line of it.

Capt. M.—(Overhauling G.'s uniform.) Go and tub. Don't bother me. I'll give you ten minutes to dress in.

[Interval, filled by the noise as of a healthy grampus splashing in the bath-room.

Capt. G.—(Emerging from dressing-room.) What time is it?

Capt. M.—Nearly eleven.

Capt. G.—Five hours more. Oh, Lord!

Capt. M.—(Aside.) 'First sign of funk, that. 'Wonder if it's going to spread. (Aloud.) Come along to breakfast.

Capt. G.—I can't eat anything. I don't want any breakfast.

Capt. M.—(Aside.) So early! (Aloud.) Captain Gadsby, I *order* you to eat breakfast, and a dashed good breakfast, too. None of your bridal airs and graces with me!

[Leads G. downstairs, and stands over him while he eats two chops.

Capt. G.—(Who has looked at his watch thrice in the last five minutes.) What time is it?

Capt. M.—Time to come for a walk. Light up.

Capt. G.—I haven't smoked for ten days, and I won't *now*. (Takes cheroot which M. has cut for him, and blows smoke through his nose luxuriously.) We aren't going down the Mall, are we?

Capt. M.—(Aside.) They're all alike in these stages. (Aloud.) No, my Vestal. We're going along the quietest road we can find.

Capt. G.—Any chance of seeing Her?

Capt. M.—Innocent! No! Come along, and, if you want me for the final obsequies, don't cut my eye out with your stick.

Capt. G.—(Spinning round.) I say, isn't She the dearest creature that ever walked? What's the time? What comes after "wilt thou take this woman"?

Capt. M.—You go for the ring. R'clect it'll be on the top of my right-hand little finger, and just be careful how you draw it off, because I shall have the Verger's fees somewhere in my glove.

Capt. G.—(Walking forward hastily.) D— the Verger! Come along! It's past twelve, and I haven't seen Her since yesterday evening. (Spinning round again.) She's an absolute angel, Jack, and She's a dashed deal too good for me. Look here, does She come up the aisle on my arm, or how?

Capt. M.—If I thought that there was the least chance of your remembering anything for two consecutive minutes, I'd tell you. Stop passaging about like that!

Capt. G.—(Halting in the middle of the road.) I say, Jack.

Capt. M.—Keep quiet for another ten minutes if you can, you lunatic, and *walk!*

[The two tramp at five miles an hour for fifteen minutes.

Capt. G.—What's the time? How about that cursed wedding-cake and the slippers? They don't throw 'em about in church, do they?

Capt. M.—In-variably. The Padre leads off with his boots.

Capt. G.—Confound your silly soul! Don't make fun of me. I can't stand it, and I won't!

Capt. M.—(Untroubled.) So-ooo, old horse! You'll have to sleep for a couple of hours this afternoon.

Capt. G.—(Spinning round.) I'm *not* going to be treated like a dashed child. Understand that!

Capt. M.—(Aside.) Nerves gone to fiddle-strings. What

a day we're having! (Tenderly putting his hand on G.'s shoulder.) My David, how long have you known this Jonathan? Would I come up here to make a fool of you—after all these years?

Capt. G.—(Penitently.) I know, I know, Jack—but I'm as upset as I can be. Don't mind what I say. Just hear me run through the drill and see if I've got it all right: "To have and to hold for better or worse, as it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be, world without end, so help me God.—Amen."

Capt. M.—(Suffocating with suppressed laughter.) Yes. That's about the gist of it. I'll prompt if you get into a hat.

Capt. G.—(Earnestly.) Yes, you'll stick by me, Jack, won't you? I'm awf'ly happy, but I don't mind telling *you* that I'm in a blue funk!

Capt. M.—(Gravely.) Are you? I should never have noticed it. You don't *look* like it.

Capt. G.—Don't I? That's all right. (Spinning round.) On my soul and honor, Jack, She's the sweetest little angel that ever came down from the sky. There isn't a woman on earth fit to speak to Her!

Capt. M.—(Aside.) And this is old Gaddy! (Aloud.) Go on if it relieves you.

Capt. G.—You can laugh! That's all you wild asses of bachelors are fit for.

Capt. M.—(Drawling.) You never *would* wait for the troop to come up. You aren't quite married yet, y'know.

Capt. G.—Ugh! That reminds me, I don't believe I shall be able to get into my boots. Let's go home and try 'em on! (Hurries forward.)

Capt. M.—Wouldn't be in *your* shoes for anything that Asia has to offer.

Capt. G.—(Spinning round.) That just shows your hideous blackness of soul—your dense stupidity—your brutal narrow-mindedness. There's only one fault about you. You're the best of good fellows, and I don't know what I

should have done without you, but—you aren't married. (Wags his head gravely.) Take a wife, Jack.

Capt. M.—(With a face like a wall.) Ya-as. Whose for choice?

Capt. G.—If you're going to be a blackguard, I'm going on. What's the time?

Capt. M.—(Hums:)

"An' since 'twas very clear we drank only ginger-beer,
Faith, there must ha' been some stingo in the ginger."

Come back, you maniac. I'm going to take you home, and you're going to lie down.

Capt. G.—What on earth do I want to lie down for?

Capt. M.—Give me a light from your cheroot and see.

Capt. G.—(Watching cheroot-butt quiver like a tuning-fork.) Sweet state I'm in!

Capt. M.—You are. I'll get you a peg and you'll go to sleep.

[They return and M. compounds a four-finger peg.

Capt. G.—Oh, *bus! bus!* It'll make me as drunk as an owl.

Capt. M.—'Curious thing, 'twon't have the slightest effect on you. Drink it off, chuck yourself down there, and go to by-bye.

Capt. G.—It's absurd. I shan't sleep. I *know* I shan't!

[Falls into heavy doze at end of seven minutes. Capt. M. watches him tenderly.

Capt. M.—Poor old Gaddy! I've seen a few turned off before, but never one who went to the gallows in this condition. 'Can't tell how it affects 'em, though. It's the thoroughbreds that sweat when they're backed into double harness . . . And that's the man who went through the guns at Amdheran like a devil possessed of devils. (Leans over G.) But this is worse than the guns, old pal—worse than the guns, isn't it? (G. turns in his sleep, and M touches him clumsily on the forehead.) Poor, dear old Gaddy! Going like the rest of 'em—going like the rest of

'em . . . Friend that sticketh closer than a brother . . . eight years. Dashed bit of a slip of a girl . . . eight weeks! And—where's your friend? (Smokes disconsolately till church clock strikes three.)

Capt. M.—Up with you! Get into your kit.

Capt. G.—Already? Isn't it too soon? Hadn't I better have a shave?

Capt. M.—*No!* You're all right. (Aside.) He'd chip his chin to pieces.

Capt. G.—What's the hurry?

Capt. M.—You've got to be there first.

Capt. G.—To be stared at?

Capt. M.—Exactly. You're part of the show. Where's the burnisher? Your spurs are in a shameful state.

Capt. G.—(Gruffly.) Jack, I be damned if you shall do that for me.

Capt. M.—(More gruffly.) Dry up and get dressed! If I choose to clean your spurs, you're under *my* orders.

[Capt. G. dresses. M. follows suit.

Capt. M.—(Critically, walking round.) M'yes, you'll do. Only don't look so like a criminal. Ring, gloves, fees—that's all right for me. Let your mustache alone. Now, if the tats are ready, we'll go.

Capt. G.—(Nervously.) It's much too soon. Let's light up! Let's have a peg! Let's . . .

Capt. M.—Let's make bally asses of ourselves.

Bells.—(Without.)

Good—peo—ple—all
To prayers—we call.

Capt. M.—There go the bells! Come on—unless you'd rather not. (They ride off.)

Bells.—

We honor the King
And Bride's joy do bring—
Good tidings we tell
And ring the Dead's knell.

Capt. G.—(Dismounting at the door of the church.) I say, aren't we much too soon? There are no end of people inside. I say, aren't we much too late? Stick by me, Jack! What the devil do I do?

Capt. M.—Strike an attitude at the head of the aisle and wait for Her. (G. groans as M. wheels him into position before three hundred eyes.)

Capt. M.—(Imploringly.) Gaddy, if you love me, for pity's sake, for the Honor of the Regiment, stand up! Chuck yourself into your uniform! Look like a man! I've got to speak to the Padre a minute. (G. breaks into a gentle perspiration.) If you wipe your face I'll *never* be your best man again. Stand *up!* (G. trembles visibly.)

Capt. M.—(Returning.) She's coming now. Look out when the music starts. There's the organ beginning to clack.

[Bride steps out of 'rickshaw at Church door. G. catches a glimpse of her and takes heart.

Organ.—(Diapason and bourdon.)

The Voice that breathed o'er Eden,
That earliest marriage-day,
The primal marriage blessing,
It hath not passed away.

Capt. M.—(Watching G.) By Jove! He *is* looking well. 'Didn't think he had it in him.

Capt. G.—How long does this hymn go on for?

Capt. M.—It will be over directly. (Anxiously.) Beginning to bleach and gulp? Hold on, Gaddy, and think o' the Regiment.

Capt. G.—(Measuredly.) I say, there's a big brown lizard crawling up that wall.

Capt. M.—My Sainted Mother! The last stage of collapse!

[Bride comes up to left of altar, lifts her eyes once to G., who is suddenly smitten mad.

Capt. G.—(To himself again and again.) Little Feather-

weight's a woman—a woman! And I thought she was a little girl.

Capt. M.—(In a whisper.) From the halt—inward *wheel!*

[Capt. G. obeys mechanically and the ceremony proceeds.

Padre.— . . . only unto her as long as ye both shall live?

Capt. G.—(His throat useless.) Ha—Hmmm!

Capt. M.—Say you will or you won't. There's no second deal here.

[Bride gives response with perfect coolness, and is given away by the father.

Capt. G.—(Thinking to show his learning.) Jack, give me away now, *quick!*

Capt. M.—You've given yourself away quite enough. Her *right*-hand, man! Repeat! Repeat! "Theodore Philip." Have you forgotten your own name?

[Capt. G. stumbles through Affirmation, which bride repeats without a tremor.

Capt. M.—Now the ring! Follow the Padre! Don't pull off my glove! Here it is! Great Cupid, he's found his voice!

[G. repeats Troth in a voice to be heard to the end of the Church and turns on his heel.

Capt. M.—(Desperately.) Rein back! Back to your troop! 'Tisn't half legal yet.

Padre.— . . . joined together let no man put asunder.

[Capt. G. paralyzed with fear, jibs after Blessing.

Capt. M.—(Quickly.) On your own front—one length. Take her with you. I don't come. You've nothing to say. (Capt. G. jingles up to altar.)

Capt. M.—(In a piercing rattle meant to be a whisper.) Kneel, you stiff-necked ruffian! Kneel!

Padre.— . . . whose daughters ye are, so long as ye do well and are not afraid with any amazement.

Capt. M.—Dismiss! Break off! Left wheel!

[All troop to vestry. They sign.

Capt. M.—Kiss Her, Gaddy.

Capt. G.—(Rubbing the ink into his glove.) Eh! Whaat?

Capt. M.—(Taking one pace to Bride.) If you don't, I shall.

Capt. G.—(Interposing an arm.) Not this journey!

[General kissing, in which Capt. G. is pursued by unknown female.

Capt. G.—(Faintly to M.) This is Hades! Can I wipe my face now?

Capt. M.—My responsibility has ended. Better ask *Missis* Gadsby.

[Capt. G. winces as if shot and procession is Mendelssohned out of Church to paternal roof, where usual tortures take place over the wedding-cake.

Capt. M.—(At table.) Up with you, Gaddy. They expect a speech.

Capt. G.—(After three minutes' agony.) Ha—Hmmm. (Thunders of applause.)

Capt. M.—Doocid good, for a first attempt. Now go and change your kit while Mamma is weeping over—"the Missus." (Capt. G. disappears. Capt. M. starts up, tearing his hair.) It's not *half* legal. Where are the shoes? Get an *ayah.*

Ayah.—Missie Captain Sahib done gone *band karo* all the *jutis.*

Capt. M.—(Brandishing scabbarded sword.) Woman, produce those shoes! Some one lend me a bread-knife. We mustn't crack Gaddy's head more than it is. (Slices heel off white satin slipper and puts slipper up his sleeve.) Where is the Bride? (To the company at large.) Be tender with that rice. It's a heathen custom. Give me the big bag.

. . . . . .

[Bride slips out quietly into 'rickshaw and departs toward the sunset.

Capt. M.—(In the open.) Stole away, by Jove! So much the worse for Gaddy! Here he is. Now, Gaddy, this'll be livelier than Amdheran! Where's your horse?

Capt. G.—(Furiously, seeing that the women are out of earshot.) Where the —— is my *Wife?*

Capt. M.—Half-way to Mahasu by this time. You'll have to ride like Young Lochinvar.

[Horse comes round on his hind legs; refuses to let G. handle him.

Capt. G.—Oh, you will, will you? Get round, you brute —you hog—you beast! Get *round!*

[Wrenches horse's head over, nearly breaking lower jaw; swings himself into saddle, and sends home both spurs in the midst of a spattering gale of Best Patna.

Capt. M.—For your life and your love—ride, Gaddy! And God bless you!

[Throws half a pound of rice at G., who disappears, bowed forward on the saddle, in a cloud of sunlit dust.

Capt. M.—I've lost old Gaddy. (Lights cigarette and strolls off, singing absently):

"You may carve it on his tombstone, you may cut it on his card,
That a young man married is a young man marred!"

Miss Deercourt.—(From her horse.) Really, Captain Mafflin! You are more plain-spoken than polite!

Capt. M.—(Aside.) They say marriage is like cholera. 'Wonder who'll be the next victim?

[White satin slipper slides from his sleeve and falls at his feet. Left wondering.

CURTAIN

THE GARDEN OF EDEN

"And ye shall be as—Gods!"

SCENE.—*Thymy grass-plot at back of the Mahasu dâk-bungalow, overlooking little wooded valley. On the left, glimpse of the Dead Forest of Fagoo; on the right, Simla Hills. In background, line of the Snows. Capt. Gadsby, now one week a husband, is smoking the pipe of peace on a rug in the sunshine. Banjo and tobacco-pouch on rug. Overhead, the Fagoo eagles. Mrs. G. comes out of bungalow*

Mrs. G.—My husband!

Capt. G.—(Lazily, with intense enjoyment.) Eh, wha-at? Say that again.

Mrs. G.—I've written to Mamma and told her that we shall be back on the 17th.

Capt. G.—Did you give her my love?

Mrs. G.—No, I kept all that for myself. (Sitting down by his side.) I thought you wouldn't mind.

Capt. G.—(With mock sternness.) I object awf'ly. How did you know that it was yours to keep?

Mrs. G.—I guessed, Phil.

Capt. G.—(Rapturously.) *Lit-tle* Featherweight!

Mrs. G.—I *won't* be called those sporting pet names, bad boy.

Capt. G.—You'll be called anything I choose. Has it ever occurred to you, Madame, that you are my Wife?

Mrs. G.—It has. I haven't ceased wondering at it yet.

Capt. G.—Nor I. It seems so strange; and yet, some-

how, it doesn't. (Confidently.) You see, it could have been no one else.

Mrs. G.—(Softly.) No. No one else—for me or for you. It must have been *all* arranged from the beginning. Phil, tell me again what made you care for me.

Capt. G.—How could I help it? You were *you*, you know.

Mrs. G.—Did you ever want to help it? Speak the truth!

Capt. G.—(A twinkle in his eye.) I did, darling, just at the first. But only at the very first. (Chuckles.) I called you—stoop low and I'll whisper—"a little beast." Ho! Ho! Ho!

Mrs. G.—(Taking him by the mustache and making him sit up.) "A—little—beast!" Stop laughing over your crime! And yet you had the—the—awful cheek to propose to me!

Capt. G.—I'd changed my mind then. And you weren't a little beast any more.

Mrs. G.—Thank you, Sir! And when was I ever?

Capt. G.—*Never!* But that first day, when you gave me tea in that peach-colored muslin gown thing, you looked—you did indeed, dear—such an absurd little mite. And I didn't know what to say to you.

Mrs. G.—(Twisting mustache.) So you said "little beast." Upon my word, Sir! *I* called *you* a "Crrrreature," but I wish now I had called you something worse.

Capt. G.—(Very meekly.) I apologize, but you're hurting me awf'ly. (Interlude.) You're welcome to torture me again on those terms.

Mrs. G.—Oh, *why* did you let me do it?

Capt. G.—(Looking across valley.) No reason in particular, but—if it amused you or did you any good—you might—wipe those dear little boots of yours on me.

Mrs. G.—(Stretching out her hands.) Don't! Oh, don't! Philip, my King, *please* don't talk like that. It's how *I* feel. You're so much too good for me. So much too good!

Capt. G.—Me! I'm not fit to put my arm round you. (Puts it round.)

Mrs. G.—Yes, you are. But I—what have I ever done?

Capt. G.—Given me a wee bit of your heart, haven't you, my Queen?

Mrs. G.—*That's* nothing. Any one would do *that*. They cou—couldn't help it.

Capt. G.—Pussy, you'll make me horribly conceited. Just when I was beginning to feel so humble, too.

Mrs. G.—Humble! I don't believe it's in your character.

Capt. G.—What do you know of my character, Impertinence?

Mrs. G.—Ah, but I shall, shan't I, Phil? I shall have time in all the years and years to come, to know everything about you; and there will be no secrets between us.

Capt. G.—Little witch! I believe you know me thoroughly already.

Mrs. G.—I think I can guess. You're selfish?

Capt. G.—Yes.

Mrs. G.—Foolish?

Capt. G.—*Very.*

Mrs. G.—And a dear?

Capt. G.—That is as my lady pleases.

Mrs. G.—Then your lady *is* pleased. (A pause.) D'you know that we're two solemn, serious, grown-up people . . .

Capt. G.—(Tilting her straw hat over her eyes.) You grown up! Pooh! You're a baby.

Mrs. G.—And we're talking nonsense.

Capt. G.—Then let's go on talking nonsense. I rather like it. Pussy, I'll tell you a secret. Promise not to repeat?

Mrs. G.—Ye-es. Only to you.

Capt. G.—I love you.

Mrs. G.—Re-ally! For how long?

Capt. G.—For ever and ever.

Mrs. G.—That's a long time.

Capt. G.—'Think so? It's the shortest *I* can do with.

Mrs. G.—You're getting quite clever.

Capt. G.—I'm talking to *you.*

Mrs. G.—Prettily turned. Hold up your stupid old head and I'll pay you for it!

Capt. G.—(Affecting supreme contempt.) Take it yourself if you want it.

Mrs. G.—I've a great mind to . . . and I will! (Takes it, and is repaid with interest.)

Capt. G.—Little Featherweight, it's my opinion that we *are* a couple of idiots.

Mrs. G.—We're the only two sensible people in the world! Ask the eagle. He's coming by.

Capt. G.—Ah! I daresay he's seen a good many "sensible people" at Mahasu. They say that those birds live for ever so long.

Mrs. G.—How long?

Capt. G.—A hundred and twenty years.

Mrs. G.—A hundred and twenty years! O-oh! And in a hundred and twenty years where will these two sensible people be?

Capt. G.—What *does* it matter so long as we are together now?

Mrs. G.—(Looking round the horizon.) Yes. Only you and I—I and you—in the whole wide, wide world until the end. (Sees the line of the Snows.) How big and quiet the hills look! D'you think they care for us?

Capt. G.—'Can't say I've consulted 'em particularly. *I* care, and that's enough for me.

Mrs. G.—(Drawing nearer to him.) Yes, now . . . but afterward. What's that little black blur on the Snows?

Capt. G.—A snowstorm, forty miles away. You'll see it move, as the wind carries it across the face of that spur, and then it will be all gone.

Mrs. G.—And then it will be all gone. (Shivers.)

Capt. G.—(Anxiously.) 'Not chilled, pet, are you? 'Better let me get your cloak.

Mrs. G.—No. Don't leave me, Phil. Stay here. I believe I am afraid. Oh, why are the hills so *horrid!* Phil, promise me, promise me that you'll always, *always* love me.

Capt. G.—What's the trouble, darling? I can't promise any more than I have; but I'll promise that again and again if you like.

Mrs. G.—(Her head on his shoulder.) *Say* it, then—say it! N-no—don't! The—the—eagles would laugh. (Recovering.) My husband, you've married a little goose.

Capt. G.—(Very tenderly.) Have I? I am content whatever she is, so long as she is mine.

Mrs. G.—(Quickly.) Because she is yours or because she is me mineself?

Capt. G.—Because she is both. (Piteously.) I'm not clever, dear, and I don't think I can make myself understood properly.

Mrs. G.—*I* understand. Pip, will you tell me something?

Capt. G.—Anything you like. (Aside.) I wonder what's coming now.

Mrs. G.—(Haltingly, her eyes lowered.) You told me once in the old days—centuries and centuries ago—that you had been engaged before. I didn't say anything—*then.*

Capt. G.—(Innocently.) Why not?

Mrs. G.—(Raising her eyes to his.) Because—because I was afraid of losing you, my heart. But now—tell about it—*please.*

Capt. G.—There's nothing to tell. I was awf'ly old then—nearly two-and-twenty—and she was *quite* that.

Mrs. G.—That means she was older than you. I shouldn't like her to have been younger. Well?

Capt. G.—Well, I fancied myself in love and raved about a bit, and—oh, yes, by Jove! I made up poetry. Ha! Ha!

Mrs. G.—You never wrote any for *me!* What happened?

Capt. G.—I came out here, and the whole thing went *phut.* She wrote to say that there had been a mistake, and then she married.

Mrs. G.—Did she care for you much?

Capt. G.—No. At least she didn't show it as far as I remember.

Mrs. G.—As far as you remember! Do you remember

her name? (Hears it and bows her head.) Thank you, my husband.

Capt. G.—Who but you had the right? Now, Little Featherweight, have you ever been mixed up in any dark and dismal tragedy?

Mrs. G.—If you call me Mrs. Gadsby p'r'aps I'll tell.

Capt. G.—(Throwing Parade rasp into his voice.) Mrs. Gadsby, confess!

Mrs. G.—Good Heavens, Phil! I never knew that you could speak in that terrible voice.

Capt. G.—You don't know half my accomplishments yet. Wait till we are settled in the Plains, and I'll show you how I bark at my troop. You were going to say, darling?

Mrs. G.—I—I don't like to, after that voice. (Tremulously.) Phil, never you *dare* to speak to me in that tone, whatever I may do!

Capt. G.—My poor little love! Why, you're shaking all over. I *am* so sorry. Of course I never meant to upset you. Don't tell me anything. I'm a brute.

Mrs. G.—No, you aren't, and I *will* tell . . . There was a man.

Capt. G.—(Lightly.) Was there? Lucky man!

Mrs. G.—(In a whisper.) And I thought I cared for him.

Capt. G.—Still luckier man! Well?

Mrs. G.—And I thought I cared for him—and I didn't—and then you came—and I cared for you very, *very* much indeed. That's all. (Face hidden.) You aren't angry, are you?

Capt. G.—Angry? Not in the least. (Aside.) Good Lord, what have I done to deserve this angel?

Mrs. G.—(Aside.) And he never asked for the name! How funny men are! But perhaps it's as well.

Capt. G.—That man will go to heaven because you once thought you cared for him. 'Wonder if you'll ever drag me up there?

Mrs. G.—(Firmly.) 'Shan't go if you don't.

Capt. G.—Thanks. I say, Pussy, I don't know much

about your religious beliefs. You were brought up to believe in a heaven and all that, weren't you?

Mrs. G.—Yes. But it was a pin-cushion heaven, with hymn books in all the pews.

Capt. G.—(Wagging his head with intense conviction.) Never mind. There is a *pukka* heaven.

Mrs. G.—Where do you bring that message from, my prophet?

Capt. G.—Here! Because we care for each other. So it's all right.

Mrs. G.—(As a troop of langurs crash through the branches.) So it's all right. But Darwin says that we came from *those!*

Capt. G.—(Placidly.) Ah! Darwin was never in love with an angel. That settles it. Sstt, you brutes! Monkeys, indeed! You shouldn't read those books.

Mrs. G.—(Folding her hands.) If it pleases my Lord the King to issue the proclamation.

Capt. G.—Don't, dear one. There are no orders between us. Only I'd *rather* you didn't. They lead to nothing, and bother people's heads.

Mrs. G.—Like your first engagement.

Capt. G.—(With an immense calm.) That was a necessary evil and led to you. Are *you* nothing?

Mrs. G.—Not so very much, am I?

Capt. G.—All this world and the next to me.

Mrs. G.—(Very softly.) My boy of boys! Shall I tell *you* something?

Capt. G.—Yes, if it's not dreadful—about other men.

Mrs. G.—It's about my own bad little self.

Capt. G.—Then it must be good. Go on, dear.

Mrs. G.—(Slowly.) I don't know why I'm telling you, Pip; but if ever you marry again—(Interlude.) Take your hand from my mouth or I'll *bite!*—In the future, then remember . . . I don't know quite how to put it!

Capt. G.—(Snorting indignantly.) Don't try. "Marry again," indeed!

Mrs. G.—I must. Listen, my husband. Never, never, *never* tell your wife anything that you do not wish her to remember and think over all her life. Because a woman—yes, I am a woman, Sir—*can't* forget.

Capt. G.—By Jove, how do *you* know that?

Mrs. G.—(Confusedly.) I don't. I'm only guessing. I am—I was—a silly little girl; but I feel that I know so much, oh, so very much more than you, dearest. To begin with, I'm your wife.

Capt. G.—So I have been led to believe.

Mrs. G.—And I shall want to know every one of your secrets—to share everything you know with you. (Stares round desperately for lucidity and coherence.)

Capt. G.—So you shall, dear, so you shall—but don't look like that.

Mrs. G.—For your own sake don't stop me, Phil. I shall never talk to you in this way again. You must *not* tell me! At least, not now. Later on, when I'm an old matron, it won't matter, but if you love me, be very good to me now; for this part of my life I shall *never* forget! Have I made you understand?

Capt. G.—I think so, child. Have I said anything yet that you disapprove of?

Mrs. G.—Will you be *very* angry? That—that voice, and what you said about the engagement . . .

Capt. G.—But you *asked* to be told that, darling.

Mrs. G.—And *that's* why you shouldn't have told me! You must be the judge, and, oh Pip, dearly as I love you, I shan't be able to help you! I shall hinder you, and you must judge in spite of me!

Capt. G.—(Meditatively.) We have a great many things to find out together, God help us both!—say so, Pussy—but we shall understand each other better every day; and I think I'm beginning to see now. How in the world did you come to know just the importance of giving me just that lead?

Mrs. G.—I've told you that I *don't* know. Only some-

how it seemed that, in all this new life, I was being guided for your sake as well as my own.

Capt. G.—(Aside.) Then Mafflin was right! They know, and we—we're blind—all of us. (Lightly.) 'Getting a little beyond our depth, dear, aren't we? I'll remember, and, if I fail, let me be punished as I deserve.

Mrs. G.—There shall be no punishment. We'll start into life together from here—you and I—and no one else.

Capt. G.—And no one else. (A pause.) Your eyelashes are all wet, Sweet? Was there ever such a quaint little Absurdity?

Mrs. G.—Was there ever such nonsense talked before?

Capt. G.—(Knocking the ashes out of his pipe.) 'Tisn't what we say, it's what we don't say, that helps. And it's all the profoundest philosophy. But no one would understand—even if it were put into a book.

Mrs. G.—The idea! No—only we ourselves, or people like ourselves—if there are any people like us.

Capt. G.—(Magisterially.) All people, not like ourselves, are blind idiots.

Mrs. G.—(Wiping her eyes.) Do you think, then, that there are any people as happy as we are?

Capt. G.—'Must be—unless we've appropriated all the happiness in the world.

Mrs. G.—(Looking toward Simla.) Poor dears! Just fancy if we have!

Capt. G.—Then we'll hang on to the whole show, for it's a great deal too jolly to lose—eh, wife o' mine?

Mrs. G.—Oh, Pip, Pip! How much of you is a solemn, married man and how much a horrid, slangy schoolboy?

Capt. G.—When you tell me how much of you was eighteen last birthday and how much is as old as the Sphinx and twice as mysterious, perhaps I'll attend to you. Lend me that banjo. The spirit moveth me to yowl at the sunset.

Mrs. G.—Mind! It's not tuned. Ah! How that jars!

Capt. G.—(Turning pegs.) It's amazingly difficult to keep a banjo to proper pitch.

Mrs. G.—It's the same with all musical instruments. What shall it be?

Capt. G.—"Vanity," and let the hills hear. (Sings through the first and half of the second verse. Turning to Mrs. G.) Now, chorus! Sing, Pussy!

Both Together.—(*Con brio*, to the horror of the monkeys who are settling for the night.)

"Vanity, all is Vanity," said Wisdom,
scorning me—
I clasped my true Love's tender hand
and answered frank and free—ee:
"If this be Vanity who'd be wise?
If this be Vanity who'd be wise?
If this be Vanity who'd be wi—ise?
(*Crescendo.*)—Vanity let it be!"

Mrs. G.—(Defiantly to the gray of the evening sky.) "Vanity let it be!"

Echo.—(From the Fagoo spur.) Let it be!

CURTAIN

FATIMA

And you may go into every room of the house and see everything that is there, but into the Blue Room you must *not* go.—*The Story of Blue Beard*

Scene.—*The Gadsbys' bungalow in the Plains. Time,* 11 A.M. *on a Sunday morning. Captain Gadsby, in his shirt-sleeves, is bending over a complete set of Hussar's equipment, from saddle to picketing-rope, which is neatly spread over the floor of his study. He is smoking an unclean brier, and his forehead is puckered with thought*

Capt. G.—(To himself, fingering a head-stall.) Jack's an ass! There's enough brass on this to load a mule . . . and,

if the Americans know anything about anything, it can be cut down to a bit only. 'Don't want the watering-bridle, either. Humbug! Half a dozen sets of chains and pulleys for the same old horse! (Scratching his head.) Now, let's consider it all over from the beginning. By Jove, I've forgotten the scale of weights! Ne'er mind. 'Keep the bit only, and eliminate every boss from the crupper to the breastplate. No breastplate at all. Simple leather strap across the breast—like the Russians. Hi! Jack never thought of *that!*

Mrs. G.—(Entering hastily, her hand bound in a cloth.) Oh, Pip! I've scalded my hand over that horrid, horrid Tiparee jam.

Capt. G.—(Absently.) Eh! Wha-at?

Mrs. G.—(With round-eyed reproach.) I've scalded it *aw*-fully! Aren't **you** sorry? And I *did* so want that jam to jam properly.

Capt. G.—Poor little woman! Let me kiss the place and make it well. (Unrolling bandage.) You small sinner! Where's that scald? I can't see it.

Mrs. G.—On the top of the little finger. There! It's a most 'normous big burn!

Capt. G. —(Kissing little finger.) Baby! Let Hyder look after the jam. You know I don't care for sweets.

Mrs. G.—In-deed? . . . Pip!

Capt. G.—Not of that kind, anyhow. And now run along, Minnie, and leave me to my own base devices. I'm busy.

Mrs. G.—(Calmly settling herself in long chair.) So I see. What a mess you're making! Why have you brought all that smelly leather stuff into the house?

Capt. G.—To play with. Do you mind, dear?

Mrs. G.—Let *me* play, too. I'd like it.

Capt. G.—I'm afraid you wouldn't, Pussy . . . Don't you think that jam will burn, or whatever it is that jam does when it's not looked after by a clever little housekeeper?

Mrs. G.—I thought you said Hyder could attend to it. I left him in the veranda, stirring—when I hurt myself so.

Capt. G.—(His eyes returning to the equipment.) Po-oor little woman . . . Three pound four and seven is three eleven, and that can be cut down to two eight, with just a *lee*-tle care, without weakening anything. Farriery is all rot in incompetent hands. What's the use of a shoe-case when a man's scouting? He can't stick it on with a lick—like a stamp—the shoe! Skittles!

Mrs. G.—What's skittles? Pah! What *is* this leather cleaned with?

Capt. G.—Cream and champagne, and . . . Look here, dear, do you really want to talk to me about anything important?

Mrs. G.—No. I've done my accounts, and I thought I'd like to see what you're doing.

Capt. G.—Well, love, now you've seen and . . . Would you mind? . . . That is to say . . . Minnie, I really *am* busy.

Mrs. G.—You want me to go?

Capt. G.—Yes, dear, for a little while. This tobacco will hang in your dress, and saddlery doesn't interest you.

Mrs. G.—Everything you do interests me, Pip.

Capt. G.—Yes, I know, I know, dear. I'll tell you all about it some day when I've put a head on this thing. In the meantime . . .

Mrs. G.—I'm to be turned out of the room like a troublesome child?

Capt. G.—No-o. I don't mean that exactly. But, you see, I shall be tramping up and down, shifting these things to and fro, and I shall be in your way. Don't you think so?

Mrs. G.—Can't I lift them about? Let me try. (Reaches forward to trooper's saddle.)

Capt. G.—Good gracious, child, don't touch it. You'll hurt yourself. (Picking up saddle.) Little girls aren't expected to handle *numdahs*. Now, where would you like it put? (Holds saddle above his head.)

Mrs. G.—(A break in her voice.) Nowhere. Pip, how good you are—and how strong! Oh, what's that ugly red streak inside your arm?

Capt. G.—(Lowering saddle quickly.) Nothing. It's a mark of sorts. (Aside.) And Jack's coming to tiffin with *his* notions all cut and dried!

Mrs. G.—I know it's a mark, but I've never seen it before. It runs all up the arm. What is it?

Capt. G.—A cut—if you want to know.

Mrs. G.—Want to know! Of course I do! I can't have my husband cut to pieces in this way. How did it come? Was it an accident? Tell me, Pip.

Capt. G.—(Grimly.) No. 'Twasn't an accident. I got it—from a man—in Afghanistan.

Mrs. G.—In action? Oh, Pip, and you *never* told me!

Capt. G.—I'd forgotten all about it.

Mrs. G.—Hold up your arm! What a horrid, ugly scar! Are you sure it doesn't hurt now? How did the man give it you?

Capt. G.—(Desperately looking at his watch.) With a knife. I came down—Old Van Loo did, that's to say—and fell on my leg, so I couldn't run. And then this man came up and began chopping at me as I sprawled.

Mrs. G.—Oh, don't, don't! That's enough! . . . Well, what happened?

Capt. G.—I couldn't get to my holster, and Maffin came round the corner and stopped the performance.

Mrs. G.—How? He's such a lazy man, I don't believe he did.

Capt. G.—Don't you? I don't think the man had much doubt about it. Jack cut his head off.

Mrs. G.—Cut—his—head—off! "With one be-low," as they say in the books?

Capt. G.—I'm not sure. I was too interested in myself to know much about it. Anyhow, the head was off, and Jack was punching old Van Loo in the ribs to make him get up. Now you know all about it, dear, and now . . .

Mrs. G.—You want me to go, of course. You never told me about this, though I've been married to you for *ever* so long; and you never *would* have told me if I hadn't found out; and you never *do* tell me anything about yourself, or what you do, or what you take an interest in.

Capt. G.—Darling, I'm always with you, aren't I?

Mrs. G.—Always in my pocket, you were going to say. I know you are; but you are always *thinking* away from me.

Capt. G.—(Trying to hide a smile.) Am I? I wasn't aware of it. I'm awf'ly sorry.

Mrs. G.—(Piteously.) Oh, don't make fun of me! Pip, you know what I mean. When you are reading one of those things about Cavalry, by that idiotic Prince—why doesn't he *be* a Prince instead of a stable-boy?

Capt. G.—Prince Kraft a stable-boy! Oh, my Aunt! Never mind, dear! You were going to say?

Mrs. G.—It doesn't matter. You don't care for what I say. Only—only you get up and walk about the room, staring in front of you, and then Mafflin comes in to dinner, and after I'm in the drawing-room I can hear you and him talking, and talking, and talking, about things I can't understand, and—oh, I get *so* tired and feel *so* lonely! I don't want to complain and be a trouble, Pip; but I do—indeed I do!

Capt. G.—My poor darling! I never thought of that. Why don't you ask some nice people in to dinner?

Mrs. G.—Nice people! Where am I to find them? Horrid frumps! And if I *did*, I shouldn't be amused. You know I only want *you*.

Capt. G.—And you have me surely, Sweetheart?

Mrs. G.—I have not! Pip, why don't you take me into your life?

Capt. G.—More than I do? That would be difficult, dear.

Mrs. G.—Yes, I suppose it would—to you. I'm no help to you—no companion to you; and you like to have it so.

Capt. G.—Aren't you a little unreasonable, Pussy?

Mrs. G.—(Stamping her foot.) I'm the most reasonable woman in the world—when I'm treated properly.

Capt. G.—And since when have I been treating you improperly?

Mrs. G.—Always—and since the beginning. You *know* you have.

Capt. G.—I don't. But I'm willing to be convinced.

Mrs. G.—(Pointing to saddlery.) There!

Capt. G.—How do you mean?

Mrs. G.—What does all *that* mean? Why am I not to be told? Is it so precious?

Capt. G.—I forget its exact Government value just at present. It means that it is a great deal too heavy.

Mrs. G.—Then why do you touch it?

Capt. G.—To make it lighter. See here, little love, I've one notion and Jack has another, but we are both agreed that all this equipment is about thirty pounds too heavy. The thing is how to cut it down without weakening any part of it, and, at the same time, allowing the trooper to carry everything he wants for his own comfort—socks and shirts and things of that kind.

Mrs. G.—Why doesn't he pack them in a little trunk?

Capt. G.—(Kissing her.) Oh, you darling! Pack them in a little trunk, indeed! Hussars don't carry trunks, and it's a most important thing to make the horse do all the carrying.

Mrs. G.—But why need *you* bother about it? You're not a trooper.

Capt. G.—No; but I command a few score of him; and equipment is nearly everything in these days.

Mrs. G.—More than *me?*

Capt. G.—Stupid! Of course not; but it's a matter that I'm tremendously interested in, because if I or Jack, or I and Jack, hack out some sort of lighter saddlery and all that, it's possible that we may get it adopted.

Mrs. G.—How?

Capt. G.—Sanctioned at Home, where they will make a sealed pattern—a pattern that all the saddlers must copy—and so it will be used by all the regiments.

Mrs. G.—And that interests you?

Capt. G.—It's part of my profession, y'know, and my profession is a good deal to me. Everything in a soldier's equipment is important, and if we can improve that equipment, so much the better for the soldiers and for us.

Mrs. G.—Who's "us"?

Capt. G.—Jack and I, though Jack's notions are too radical. What's that big sigh for, Minnie?

Mrs. G.—Oh, nothing . . . and you've kept all this a secret from me! Why?

Capt. G.—Not a secret exactly, dear. I didn't say anything about it to you because I didn't think it would amuse you.

Mrs. G.—And am I only made to be amused?

Capt. G.—No, of course. I merely mean that it couldn't interest you.

Mrs. G.—It's *your* work and—and if you'd let me I'd count all these things up. If they are too heavy, you know by how much they are too heavy, and you must have a list of things made out to your scale of lightness, and . . .

Capt. G.—I have got both scales somewhere in my head; but it's hard to tell how light you can make a headstall, for instance, until you've actually had a model made.

Mrs. G.—But if you read out the list, I could copy it down, and pin it up there just above your table. Wouldn't that do?

Capt. G.—It would be awf'ly nice, dear, but it would be giving you trouble for nothing. I can't work that way. I go by rule of thumb. I know the present scale of weights, and the other one—the one that I'm trying to work to—will shift and vary so much that I couldn't be certain, even if I wrote it down.

Mrs. G.—I'm *so* sorry. I thought I might help. Is there anything else that I could be of use in?

Capt. G.—(Looking round the room.) I can't think of anything. You're *always* helping me, you know.

Mrs. G.—Am I? How?

Capt. G.—You are you of course, and as long as you're near me—I can't explain exactly, but it's in the air.

Mrs. G.—And that's why you wanted to send me away?

Capt. G.—That's only when I'm trying to do work—grubby work like this.

Mrs. G.—Mafflin's better, then, isn't he?

Capt. G.—(Rashly.) Of course he is. Jack and I have been thinking down the same groove for two or three years about this equipment. It's our hobby, and it may really be useful some day.

Mrs. G.—(After a pause.) And that's all that you have away from me?

Capt. G.—It isn't very far away from you now. Take care that the oil on that bit doesn't come off on your dress.

Mrs. G.—I wish—I wish so much that I could really help you. I believe I could . . . if I left the room. But that's not what I mean.

Capt. G.—(Aside.) Give me patience! I wish she would go. (Aloud.) I assure you you can't do anything for me, Minnie, and I must really settle down to this. Where's my pouch?

Mrs. G.—(Crossing to writing-table.) Here you are, Bear. What a mess you keep your table in!

Capt. G.—Don't touch it. There's a method in my madness, though you mightn't think it.

Mrs. G.—(At table.) I want to look . . . Do you keep accounts, Pip?

Capt. G.—(Bending over saddlery.) Of a sort. Are you rummaging among the Troop papers? Be careful.

Mrs. G.—Why? I shan't disturb anything. Good gracious! I had no idea that you had anything to do with so many sick horses.

Capt. G.—'Wish I hadn't, but they insist on falling sick. Minnie, if I were you I really should not investigate those

papers. You may come across something that you won't like.

Mrs. G.—Why will you always treat me like a child? I know I'm not displacing the horrid things.

Capt. G.—(Resignedly.) Very well, then. Don't blame me if anything happens. Play with the table and let me go on with the saddlery. (Slipping hand into trousers-pocket.) Oh, the deuce!

Mrs. G.—(Her back to G.) What's that for?

Capt. G.—Nothing. (Aside.) There's not much of importance in it, but I wish I'd torn it up.

Mrs. G.—(Turning over contents of table.) I know you'll hate me for this; but I do want to see what your work is like. (A pause.) Pip, what are "farcy-buds"?

Capt. G.—Hah! Would you really like to know? They aren't pretty things.

Mrs. G.—This Journal of Veterinary Science says they are of "absorbing interest." Tell me.

Capt. G.—(Aside.) It may turn her attention.

[Gives a long and designedly loathsome account of glanders and farcy.

Mrs. G.—Oh, that's enough. Don't go on!

Capt. G.—But you wanted to know . . . Then these things suppurate and matterate and spread . . .

Mrs. G.—Pip, you're making me sick! You're a horrid, disgusting schoolboy!

Capt. G.—(On his knees among the bridles.) You asked to be told. It's not my fault if you worry me into talking about horrors.

Mrs. G.—Why didn't you say—No?

Capt. G.—Good heavens, child! Have you come in here simply to bully me?

Mrs. G.—I bully *you?* How could I! You're so strong. (Hysterically.) Strong enough to pick me up and put me outside the door, and leave me there to cry. Aren't you?

Capt. G.—It seems to me that you're an irrational little baby. Are you quite well?

Mrs. G.—Do I look ill? (Returning to table.) Who is your lady friend with the big gray envelope and the fat monogram outside?

Capt. G.—(Aside.) Then it wasn't in the drawers, confound it! (Aloud.) "God made her, therefore let her pass for a woman." You remember what farcy-buds are like?

Mrs. G.—(Showing envelope.) This has nothing to do with *them*. I'm going to open it. May I?

Capt. G.—Certainly, if you want to. I'd sooner you didn't, though. I don't ask to look at your letters to the Deercourt girl.

Mrs. G.—You'd *better* not, Sir! (Takes letter from envelope.) Now, may I look? If you say no, I shall cry.

Capt. G.—You've never cried in my knowledge of you, and I don't believe you could.

Mrs. G.—I feel very like it to-day, Pip. Don't be hard on me. (Reads letter.) It begins in the middle, without any "Dear Captain Gadsby," or anything. How funny!

Capt. G.—(Aside.) No, it's not Dear Captain Gadsby, or anything, now. How funny!

Mrs. G.—What a strange letter! (Reads.) "And so the moth has come too near the candle at last, and has been singed into—shall I say Respectability? I congratulate him, and hope he will be as happy as he deserves to be." What does that mean? Is she congratulating you about our marriage?

Capt. G.—Yes, I suppose so.

Mrs. G.—(Still reading letter.) She seems to be a particular friend of yours.

Capt. G.—Yes. She was an excellent matron of sorts—a Mrs. Herriott—wife of a Colonel Herriott. I used to know some of her people at Home long ago—before I came out.

Mrs. G.—Some Colonels' wives are young—as young as me. I knew one who was younger.

Capt. G.—Then it couldn't have been Mrs. Herriott. She was old enough to have been your mother, dear.

Mrs. G.—I remember now. Mrs. Scargill was talking

about her at the Duffins' tennis before you came for me, on Tuesday. Captain Mafflin said she was a "dear old woman." Do you know, I think Mafflin is a very clumsy man with his feet.

Capt. G.—(Aside.) Good old Jack! (Aloud.) Why, dear?

Mrs. G.—He had put his cup down on the ground then, and he literally stepped into it. Some of the tea spirted over my dress—the gray one. I meant to tell you about it before.

Capt. G.—(Aside.) There are the makings of a strategist about Jack, though his methods are coarse. (Aloud.) You'd better get a new dress then. (Aside.) Let us pray that that will turn her.

Mrs. G.—Oh, it isn't stained in the least. I only thought that I'd tell you. (Returning to letter.) *What* an extraordinary person! (Reads.) "But need I remind you that you have taken upon yourself a charge of wardship"—what in the world is a charge of wardship?—"which, as you yourself know, may end in Consequences" . . .

Capt. G.—(Aside.) It's safest to let 'em see everything as they come across it; but 'seems to me that there are exceptions to the rule. (Aloud.) I told you that there was nothing to be gained from rearranging my table.

Mrs. G.—(Absently.) What *does* the woman mean? She goes on talking about Consequences—"almost inevitable Consequences" with a capital C—for half a page. (Flushing scarlet.) Oh, good gracious! How abominable!

Capt. G.—(Promptly.) Do you think so? Doesn't it show a sort of motherly interest in us. (Aside.) Thank Heaven, Harry always wrapped her meaning up safely! (Aloud.) *Is* it absolutely necessary to go on with the letter, darling?

Mrs. G.—It's impertinent—it's simply horrid. What *right* has this woman to write in this way to you? She oughtn't to.

Capt. G.—When you write to the Deercourt girl, I notice that you generally fill three or four sheets. Can't you let an

old woman babble on paper once in a way? She means well.

Mrs. G.—I don't care. She shouldn't write, and if she did, you ought to have shown me her letter.

Capt. G.—Can't you understand why I kept it to myself, or must I explain at length—as I explained the farcy-buds?

Mrs. G.—(Furiously.) Pip, I *hate* you! This is as bad as those idiotic saddle-bags on the floor. Never mind whether it would please me or not, you ought to have given it to me to read.

Capt. G.—It comes to the same thing. You took it yourself.

Mrs. G.—Yes, but if I hadn't taken it, you wouldn't have said a word. I think this Harriet Herriott—it's like a name in a book—is an interfering old Thing.

Capt. G.—(Aside.) So long as you thoroughly understand that she *is* old, I don't much care what you think. (Aloud.) Very good, dear. Would you like to write and tell her so? She's seven thousand miles away.

Mrs. G.—I don't want to have anything to do with her, but you ought to have told me. (Turning to last page of letter.) And she patronizes *me*, too. *I've* never seen her! (Reads.) "I do not know how the world stands with you. In all human probability I shall never know; but whatever I may have said before, I pray for *her* sake more than for yours that all may be well. I have learned what misery means, and I dare not wish that any one dear to you should share my knowledge."

Capt. G.—Good God! Can't you leave that letter alone, or, at least, can't you refrain from reading it aloud? I've been through it once. Put it back on the desk. Do you hear me?

Mrs. G.—(Irresolutely.) I sh-shan't! (Looks at G.'s eyes.) Oh, Pip, *please!* I didn't mean to make you angry —'deed I didn't. Pip, I'm so sorry. I know I've wasted your time . . .

Capt. G.—(Grimly.) You have. Now, will you be good

enough to go . . . if there is nothing more in my room that you are anxious to pry into?

Mrs. G.—(Putting out her hands.) Oh, Pip, don't look at me like that! I've never seen you look like that before, and it hu-urts me! I'm sorry. I oughtn't to have been here at all, and—and—and—(sobbing). Oh, be good to me! Be good to me! There's only you—anywhere!

[Breaks down in long chair, hiding face in cushions.

Capt. G.—(Aside.) She doesn't know how she flicked me on the raw. (Aloud, bending over chair.) I didn't mean to be harsh, dear—I didn't really. You can stay here as long as you please, and do what you please. Don't cry like that. You'll make yourself sick. (Aside.) What on earth has come over her? (Aloud.) Darling, what's the matter with you?

Mrs. G.—(Her face still hidden.) Let me go—let me go to my own room. Only—only say you aren't angry with me.

Capt. G.—Angry with *you*, love! Of course not. I was angry with myself. I'd lost my temper over the saddlery . . . Don't hide your face, Pussy. I want to kiss it.

[Bends lower, Mrs. G. slides right arm round his neck.

Several interludes and much sobbing.

Mrs. G.—(In a whisper.) I didn't mean about the jam when I came in to tell you . . .

Capt. G.—Bother the jam and the equipment! (Interlude.)

Mrs. G.—(Still more faintly.) My finger wasn't scalded at *all*. I—I wanted to speak to you about—about—something else, and—I didn't know how.

Capt. G.—Speak away, then. (Looking into her eyes.) Eh! Wha-at? Minnie! Here, don't go away! You don't mean?

Mrs. G.—(Hysterically, backing to portière and hiding her face in its folds.) The—the Almost Inevitable Consequences! (Flits through portière as G. attempts to catch her, and bolts herself in her own room.)

Capt. G.—(His arms full of portière.) Oh! (Sitting

down heavily in chair.) I'm a brute—a pig—a bully, and a blackguard. My poor, poor little darling! "Made to be amused only!" . . .

CURTAIN

THE VALLEY OF THE SHADOW

"Knowing Good and Evil"

SCENE.—*The Gadsbys' bungalow in the Plains, in June. Punkah-coolies asleep in veranda where Capt. Gadsby is walking up and down. Doctor's trap in porch. Junior Chaplain fluctuating generally and uneasily through the house. Time,* 3:40 A.M. *Heat* 94° *in veranda*

Doctor.—(Coming into veranda and touching G. on the shoulder.) You had better go in and see her now.

Capt. G.—(The color of good cigar-ash.) Eh, wha-at? Oh, yes, of course. What did you say?

Doctor—(Syllable by syllable.) Go—in—to—the—room—and—see—her. She wants to speak to you. (Aside, testily.) I shall have *him* on my hands next.

Junior Chaplain.—(In half-lighted dining-room.) Isn't there any . . .

Doctor.—(Savagely.) Hush, you little fool!

Junior Chaplain.—Let me do my work. Gadsby, stop a minute! (Edges after G.)

Doctor.—Wait till she sends for you at least—*at least.* Man alive, he'll kill you if you go in there! What are you bothering him for?

Junior Chaplain.—(Coming into veranda.) I've given him a stiff brandy-peg. He wants it. You've forgotten him for the last ten hours and—forgotten yourself too.

[G. enters bedroom, which is lighted by one night-light. Ayah on the floor pretending to be asleep.

Voice.—(From the bed.) All down the street—*such* bonfires! *Ayah*, go and put them out! (Appealingly.) How can I sleep with an installation of the C. I. E. in my room? No—not C. I. E. Something else. *What* was it?

Capt. G.—(Trying to control his voice.) Minnie, I'm here. (Bending over bed.) Don't you know me, Minnie? It's me—it's Phil—it's your husband.

Voice.—(Mechanically.) It's me—it's Phil—it's your husband.

Capt. G.—She doesn't know me! . . . It's your own husband, darling.

Voice.—Your own husband, darling.

Ayah.—(With an inspiration.) *Memsahib* understanding all *I* saying.

Capt. G.—Make her understand me then—quick!

Ayah.—(Hand on Mrs. G.'s forehead.) *Memsahib!* Captain Sahib *aya.*

Voice.—*Salam do.* (Fretfully.) I know I'm not fit to be seen.

Ayah.—(Aside to G.) Say "*marneen*" same as at breakfash.

Capt. G.—Good-morning, little woman. How are we to-day?

Voice.—That's Phil. Poor old Phil. (Viciously.) Phil, you fool, I can't see you. Come nearer.

Capt. G.—Minnie! Minnie! It's me—you know me?

Voice.—(Mockingly.) Of course I do. Who does not know the man who was so cruel to his wife—almost the only one he ever had?

Capt. G.—Yes, dear. Yes—of course, of course. But won't you speak to him? He wants to speak to you *so* much.

Voice.—They'd never let him in. The Doctor would give *darwaza band* even if he were in the house. He'll never come. (Despairingly.) Oh, Judas! Judas! Judas!

Capt. G.—(Putting out his arms.) They have let him in, and he always was in the house. Oh, my love—don't you know me?

Voice.—(In a half chant.) "And it came to pass at the eleventh hour that this poor soul repented." It knocked at the gates, but they were shut—tight as a plaster—a great, burning plaster. They had pasted our marriage-certificate all across the door, and it was made of red-hot iron—people really ought to be more careful, you know.

Capt. G.—What *am* I to do? (Takes her in his arms.) Minnie! speak to me—to Phil.

Voice.—What shall I say? Oh, tell me what to say before it's too late! They are all going away and I can't say anything.

Capt. G.—Say you know me! Only say you know me!

Doctor.—(Who has entered quietly.) For pity's sake, don't take it too much to heart, Gadsby. It's this way sometimes. They won't recognize. They say all sorts of queer things—don't you *see?*

Capt. G.—All right! All right! Go away now; she'll recognize me; you're bothering her. She *must*—mustn't she, Doc?

Doctor.—She will before . . . Have I your leave to try . . .

Capt. G.—Anything you please, so long as she'll know me. It's only a question of—hours, isn't it?

Doctor.—(Professionally.) While there's life there's hope, y'know. But don't build on it.

Capt. G.—I don't. Pull her together if it's possible. (Aside.) What have I done to deserve this?

Doctor.—(Bending over bed.) Now, Mrs. Gadsby! We shall be all right to-morrow. You *must* take it, or I shan't let Phil see you. It isn't nasty, is it?

Voice.—Medicines! *Always* more medicines! Can't you leave me alone?

Capt. G.—Oh, leave her in peace, Doc!

Doctor.—(Stepping back—aside.) May I be forgiven if I've done wrong. (Aloud.) In a few minutes she ought to be sensible· but I daren't tell you to look for anything. It's only—

Capt. G.—What? Go *on*, man.

Doctor.—(In a whisper.) Forcing the last rally.

Capt. G.—Then leave us alone.

Doctor.—Don't mind what she says at first, if you can. They . . . they . . . they turn against those they love most sometimes in this . . . It's hard, but . . .

Capt. G.—Am I her husband or are you? Leave us alone for whatever time we have together.

Voice.—(Confidentially.) And we were engaged *quite* suddenly, Emma. I assure you that I never thought of it for a moment; but oh, my little Me!—I don't know *what* I should have done if he *hadn't* proposed.

Capt. G.—She thinks of that Deercourt girl before she thinks of me. (Aloud.) Minnie!

Voice.—Not from the shops, Mammy dear. You can get the real leaves from Kaintu, and (laughing weakly) never mind about the blossoms . . . Dead white silk is only fit for widows, and I *won't* wear it. It's as bad as a winding-sheet. (A long pause.)

Capt. G.—I never asked a favor yet. If there is anybody to listen to me, let her know me—even if I die too!

Voice.—(Very faintly.) Pip, Pip dear.

Capt. G.—I'm here, darling.

Voice.—What has happened? They've been bothering me so with medicines and things, and they wouldn't let you come and see me. I was never ill before. Am I ill now?

Capt. G.—You—you aren't quite well.

Voice.—How funny! Have I been ill long?

Capt. G.—Some days; but you'll be all right in a little time.

Voice.—Do you think so, Pip? I don't feel well and . . . Oh! what *have* they done to my hair?

Capt. G.—I d-d-don't know.

Voice.—They've cut it off. What a shame!

Capt. G.—It must have been to make your head cooler.

Voice.—'Just like a boy's wig. Don't I look horrid?

Capt. G.—Never looked prettier in your life, dear. (Aside.) How am I to ask her to say good-by?

Voice.—I don't *feel* pretty. I feel very ill. My heart won't work. It's nearly dead inside me, and there's a funny feeling in my eyes. Everything seems the same distance—you and the almirah and the table—inside my eyes or miles away. What does it mean, Pip?

Capt. G.—You're a little feverish, Sweetheart—very feverish. (Breaking down.) My love! my love! How can I let you go?

Voice.—I thought so. Why didn't you tell me that at first?

Capt. G.—What?

Voice.—That I am going to . . . die.

Capt. G.—But you aren't! You shan't.

Ayah.—(Stepping into veranda after a glance at the bed.) *Punkah chor do!*

Voice.—It's hard, Pip. So very, *very* hard after one year—just one year. (Wailing.) And I'm only twenty. Most girls aren't even married at twenty. Can't they do *anything* to help me? I don't *wan't* to die.

Capt. G.—Hush, dear. You won't.

Voice.—What's the use of talking? *Help* me! You've never failed me yet. Oh, Phil, help me to keep alive. (Feverishly.) I don't believe you wish me to live. You weren't a bit sorry when that horrid Baby thing died. I wish I'd killed Baby!

Capt. G.—(Drawing his hand across his forehead.) It's more than a man's meant to bear—it's not right. (Aloud.) Minnie, love, I'd die for you if it would help.

Voice.—No more death. There's enough already. Pip, don't *you* die too.

Capt. G.—I wish I dared.

Voice.—It says: "Till Death do us part." Nothing after that . . . and so it would be no use. It stops at the dying. *Why* does it stop there? Only such a very short life, too. Pip, I'm sorry we married.

Capt. G.—No! Anything but that, Min!

Voice.—Because you'll forget and I'll forget. Oh, Pip, *don't* forget! I always loved you, though I was cross sometimes. If I ever did anything that you didn't like, say you forgive me now.

Capt. G.—You never did, darling. On my soul and honor you never did. I haven't a thing to forgive you.

Voice.—I sulked for a whole week about those petunias. (With a laugh.) What a little wretch I was, and how grieved you were! Forgive me that, Pip.

Capt. G.—There's nothing to forgive. It was my fault. They *were* too near the drive. For God's sake don't talk so, Minnie! There's such a lot to say and so little time to say it in.

Voice.—Say that you'll always love me—until the end.

Capt. G.—Until the end. (Carried away.) It's a lie. It *must* be, because we've loved each other. This isn't the end.

Voice.—(Relapsing into semi-delirium.) *My* Church service has an ivory cross on the back, and *it* says so, so it must be true. "Till Death do us part." . . . But that's a lie. (With a parody of G.'s manner.) A damned lie! (Recklessly.) Yes, I can swear as well as Trooper Pip. I can't make my head think, though. That's because they cut off my hair. How *can* one think with one's head all fuzzy? (Pleadingly.) Hold me, Pip! Keep me with you always and always. (Relapsing.) But if you marry the Thorniss girl when I'm dead, I'll come back and howl under our bedroom window all night. Oh, bother! You'll think I'm a jackal. Pip, what time is it?

Capt. G.—A little before the dawn, dear.

Voice.—I wonder where I shall be this time tomorrow?

Capt. G.—Would you like to see the Padre?

Voice.—Why should I? He'd tell me that I am going to heaven; and that wouldn't be true, because you are here.

Do you recollect when he upset the cream-ice all over his trousers at the Gassers' tennis?

Capt. G.—Yes, dear.

Voice.—I often wondered whether he got another pair of trousers; but then his are so shiny all over that you really couldn't tell unless you were told. Let's call him in and ask.

Capt. G.—(Gravely.) No. I don't think he'd like that. 'Your head comfy, Sweetheart?

Voice.—(Faintly, with a sigh of contentment.) Yeth! Gracious, Pip, when *did* you shave last? Your chin's worse than the barrel of a musical box . . . No, don't lift it up. I like it. (A pause.) You said you've never cried at all. You're crying all over my cheek.

Capt. G.—I—I—I can't help it, dear.

Voice.—How funny! I couldn't cry now to save my life. (G. shivers.) *I* want to sing.

Capt. G.—Won't it tire you? 'Better not, perhaps.

Voice.—Why? I *won't* be ordered about! (Begins in a hoarse quaver):

Minnie bakes oaten cake, Minnie brews ale,
All because her Johnnie's coming home from the sea,
(That's parade, Pip).
And she grows red as rose who was so pale:
And "Are you sure the church-clock goes?" says she.

(Pettishly.) I knew I couldn't take the last note. How do the bass chords run? (Puts out her hands and begins playing piano on the sheet.)

Capt. G.—(Catching up hands.) Ah! Don't do that, Pussy, if you love me.

Voice.—Love you? Of course I do. Who else should it be? (A pause.)

Voice.—(Very clearly.) Pip, I'm going now. Something's choking me cruelly. (Indistinctly.) Into the dark . . . without you, my heart . . . But it's a lie, dear . . . we mustn't believe it . . . For ever and ever, living or dead. Don't let me go, my husband—hold me tight . . . They can't . . .

whatever happens. (A cough.) Pip—*my* Pip! Not for always . . . and . . . so . . . soon! Voice ceases.)

[Pause of ten minutes. G. buries his face in the side of the bed while Ayah bends over bed from opposite side and feels Mrs. G.'s breast and forehead.

Capt. G.—(Rising.) *Doctor Sahib ko salaam do.*

Ayah.—(Still by bedside, with a shriek.) Ai! Ai! *Tuta—phuta!* My *Memsahib!* Not getting—not have got—*Pusseena agya!* (Fiercely to G.) *Tum jao Doctor Sahib ko jaldi! Oh!* my *Memsahib!*

Doctor. —(Entering hastily.) Come away, Gadsby. (Bends over bed.) Eh? The Dev— What inspired you to stop the punkah? Get out, man—go away—wait outside! *Go!* Here, Ayah! (Over his shoulder to G.) Mind, I promise nothing.

[The dawn breaks as G. stumbles into the garden.

Capt. M.—(Reining up at the gate on his way to parade, and very soberly.) Old man, how goes?

Capt. G.—(Dazed.) I don't quite know. Stay a bit. Have a drink or something. Don't run away. You're just getting amusing. Ha! Ha!

Capt. M.—(Aside.) What *am* I let in for? Gaddy has aged ten years in the night.

Capt. G.—(Slowly, fingering the charger's head-stall.) Your curb's too loose.

Capt. M.—So it is. Put it straight, will you? (Aside.) I shall be late for parade. Poor Gaddy!

[Capt. G. links and unlinks curb-chain aimlessly, and finally stands staring toward the veranda. The day brightens.

Doctor.—(Knocked out of professional gravity, tramping across flower-beds and shaking G.'s hands.) It's—it's—it's! —Gadsby, there's a fair chance—a *dashed* fair chance! The flicker, y'know. The sweat, y'know! I *saw* how it would be. The punkah, y'know. Deuced clever woman that Ayah of yours. Just at the right time. A *dashed* good

chance! No—you don't go in. We'll pull her through yet. I promise on my reputation—under Providence. Send a man with this note to Bingle. Two heads better than one. 'Specially the Ayah! *We'll* pull her round. (Retreats hastily to house.)

Capt. G.—(His head on neck of M.'s charger.) Jack! I bub—bub—believe, I'm going to make a bub—bub—bloody exhibition of myself.

Capt. M.—(Sniffing openly and feeling in his left cuff.) I b-b—believe I'b doing it already. Old bad, what *cad* I say? I'b as pleased as—Cod *dab* you, Gaddy! You're one big idiot and I'b adother. (Pulling himself together.) Sit tight! Here comes the Devil dodger.

Junior Chaplain.—(Who is not in the Doctor's confidence.) We—we are only men in these things, Gadsby. I know that I can say nothing now to help . . .

Capt. M.—(Jealously.) Then don't say it! Leave him alone. It's not bad enough to croak over. Here, Gaddy, take the *chit* to Bingle and ride hell-for-leather. It'll do you good. I can't go.

Junior Chaplain.—Do him good! (Smiling.) Give me the *chit* and I'll drive. Let him lie down. Your horse is blocking my cart—*please!*

Capt. M.—(Slowly, without reining back.) I beg your pardon—I'll apologize. On paper if you like.

Junior Chaplain.—(Flicking M.'s charger.) That'll do, thanks. Turn in, Gadsby, and I'll bring Bingle back—ahem—"hell-for-leather."

Capt. M.—(*Solus.*) It would ha' served me right if he had cut me across the face. He can drive too. I shouldn't care to go that pace in a bamboo cart. What a faith he must have in his Maker—of harness! Come *hup*, you brute! (Gallops off to parade, blowing his nose, as the sun rises.)

(INTERVAL OF FIVE WEEKS)

Mrs. G.—(Very white and pinched, in morning-wrapper at breakfast-table.) How big and strange the room looks,

and oh, how glad I am to see it again! What dust, though! I must talk to the servants. Sugar, Pip? I've almost forgotten. (Seriously.) Wasn't I very ill?

Capt. G.—Iller than I liked. (Tenderly.) Oh, you bad little Pussy, what a start you gave me!

Mrs. G.—I'll never do it again.

Capt. G.—You'd better not. And now get those poor pale cheeks pink again, or I shall be angry. Don't try to lift the urn. You'll upset it. Wait. (Comes round to head of table and lifts urn.)

Mrs. G.—(Quickly.) *Khitmatgar, bow-archi-khana se kettly lao.* (Drawing down G.'s face to her own.) Pip dear, *I* remember.

Capt. G.—What?

Mrs. G.—That last terrible night.

Capt. G.—Then just you forget all about it.

Mrs. G.—(Softly, her eyes filling.) Never. It has brought us *very* close together, my husband. There! (Interlude.) I'm going to give Junda a *saree.*

Capt. G.—I gave her fifty dibs.

Mrs. G.—So she told me. It was a 'normous reward. Was I worth it? (Several interludes.) Don't! Here's the *khitmatgar.* Two lumps or one, Sir?

CURTAIN

THE SWELLING OF JORDAN

"If thou hast run with the footmen and they have wearied thee, then how canst thou contend with horses? And if in the land of peace wherein thou trustedst they have wearied thee, how wilt thou do in the swelling of Jordan?"

SCENE.—*The Gadsbys' bungalow in the Plains on a January morning. Mrs. G. arguing with bearer in back veranda. Capt. M. rides up*

Capt. M.—'Mornin', Mrs. Gadsby. How's the Infant Phenomenon and the Proud Proprietor?

Mrs. G.—You'll find them in the front veranda; go through the house. I'm Martha just now.

Capt. M.—'Cumbered about with cares of *khitmatgars?* I fly.

[Passes into front veranda, where Gadsby is watching Gadsby, Junior, *ætate* ten months, crawling about the matting.

Capt. M.—What's the trouble, Gaddy—spoiling an honest man's Europe morning this way? (Seeing G., Junior.) By Jove, that yearling's comin' on amazingly! Any amount of bone below the knee there.

Capt. G.—Yes, he's a healthy little scoundrel. Don't you think his hair's growing?

M.—Let's have a look. Hi! Hst! Come here, General Luck, and we'll report on you.

Mrs. G.—(Within.) What absurd name will you give him next? Why do you call him that?

M.—Isn't he our Inspector-General of Cavalry? Doesn't he come down in his seventeen-two perambulator every morning the Pink Hussars parade? Don't wriggle, Brigadier.

Give us your private opinion on the way the third squadron went past. 'Trifle ragged, weren't they?

G.—A bigger set of tailors than the new draft I don't wish to see. They've given me more than my fair share—knocking the squadron out of shape. It's sickening!

M.—When you're in command, you'll do better, young 'un. Can't you walk yet? Grip my finger and try. (To G.) 'Twon't hurt his hocks, will it?

G.—Oh, no. Don't let him flop, though, or he'll lick all the blacking off your boots.

Mrs. G.—(Within.) Who's destroying my son's character?

M.—And my Godson's. I'm ashamed of you, Gaddy. Punch your father in the eye, Jack! Don't you stand it! Hit him again!

G.—(*Sotto voce.*) Put The *Butcha* down and come to the end of the veranda. I'd rather the wife didn't hear—just now.

M.—You look awf'ly serious. Anything wrong?

G.—'Depends on your view entirely. I say, Jack, you won't think more hardly of me than you can help, will you? Come further this way . . . The fact of the matter is, that I've made up my mind—at least I'm thinking seriously of . . . cutting the Service.

M.—Hwhatt?

G.—Don't shout. I'm going to send in my papers.

M.—You! Are you mad?

G.—No—only married.

M.—Look here! What's the meaning of it all? You never intend to leave *us*. You *can't*. Isn't the best squadron of the best regiment of the best cavalry in all the world good enough for you?

G.—(Jerking his head over his shoulder.) She doesn't seem to thrive in this God-forsaken country, and there's The *Butcha* to be considered and all that, you know.

M.—Does she say that she doesn't like India?

G.—That's the worst of it. She won't for fear of leaving me.

M.—What are the Hills made for?

G.—Not for *my* wife, at any rate.

M.—You know too much, Gaddy, and—I don't like you any the better for it!

G.—Never mind that. She wants England, and The *Butcha* would be all the better for it. I'm going to chuck. You don't understand.

M.—(Hotly.) I understand *this*. One hundred and thirty-seven new horses to be licked into shape somehow before Luck comes round again; a hairy-heeled draft who'll give more trouble than the horses; a camp next cold weather for a certainty; ourselves the first on the roster; the Russian shindy ready to come to a head at five minutes' notice, and you, the best of us all, backing out of it all! Think a little, Gaddy. You *won't* do it.

G.—Hang it, a man has some duties toward his family, I suppose.

M.—I remember a man, though, who told me, the night after Amdheran, when we were picketed under Jagai, and he'd left his sword—by the way, did you ever pay Ranken for that sword?—in an Utmanzai's head—that man told me that he'd stick by me and the Pinks as long as he lived. I don't blame him for not sticking by me—I'm not much of a man—but I *do* blame him for not sticking by the Pink Hussars.

G.—(Uneasily.) We were little more than boys then. Can't you see, Jack, how things stand? 'Tisn't as if we were serving for our bread. We've all of us, more or less, got the filthy lucre. I'm luckier than some, perhaps. There's no *call* for me to serve on.

M.—None in the world for you or for us, except the Regimental. If you don't choose to answer to *that*, of course . . .

G.—Don't be too hard on a man. You know that a lot of us only take up the thing for a few years and then go back to Town and catch on with the rest.

M.—Not lots, and they aren't some of *Us*.

G.—And then there are one's affairs at Home to be con-

sidered—my place and the rents, and all that. I don't suppose my father can last much longer, and that means the title, and so on.

M.—'Fraid you won't be entered in the Stud Book correctly unless you go Home? Take six months, then, and come out in October. If I could slay off a brother or two, I s'pose I should be a Marquis of sorts. Any fool can be that; but it needs *men*, Gaddy—men like you—to lead flanking squadrons properly. Don't you delude yourself into the belief that you're going Home to take your place and prance about among pink-nosed Cabuli dowagers. You aren't built that way. I know better.

G.—A man has a right to live his life as happily as he can. *You* aren't married.

M.—No—praise be to Providence and the one or two women who have had the good sense to *jawab* me.

G.—Then you don't know what it is to go into your own room and see your wife's head on the pillow, and when everything else is safe and the house *bunded* up for the night, to wonder whether the roof-beams won't give and kill her.

M.—(Aside.) Revelations first and second! (Aloud.) So-o! I knew a man who got squiffy at our Mess once and confided to me that he never helped his wife on to her horse without praying that she'd break her neck before she came back. All husbands aren't alike, you see.

G.—What on earth has that to do with my case? The man must ha' been mad, or his wife as bad as they make 'em.

M.—(Aside.) No fault of yours, if either weren't all you say. You've forgotten the time when you were insane about the Herriott woman. You always were a good hand at forgetting. (Aloud.) Not more mad than men who go to the other extreme. Be reasonable, Gaddy. Your roof-beams are sound enough.

G.—That was only a way of speaking. I've been uneasy and worried about the wife ever since that awful business three years ago—when—I nearly lost her. Can you wonder?

M.—Oh, a shell never falls twice in the same place. You've paid your toll to misfortune—why should your wife be picked out more than anybody else's?

G.—I can *talk* just as reasonably as you can, but you don't understand—you don't understand. And then there's The *Butcha.* Deuce knows where the Ayah takes him to sit in the evening! He has a bit of a cough. Haven't you noticed it?

M.—Bosh! The Brigadier's jumping out of his skin with pure condition. He's got a muzzle like a rose-leaf and the chest of a two-year-old. What's demoralized you?

G.—Funk. That's the long and the short of it. Funk!

M.—But what *is* there to funk?

G.—Everything. It's ghastly.

M.—Ah! I see.

"You don't want to fight,
And by Jingo when we do,
You've got the kid, you've got the wife,
You've got the money, too."

That's about the case, eh?

G.—I suppose that's it. But it's not for myself. It's because of *them.* At least, I think it is.

M.—Are you sure? Looking at the matter in a cold-blooded light, the wife is provided for even if you were wiped out to-night. She has an ancestral home to go to, money, and the Brigadier to carry on the illustrious name.

G.—Then it is for myself or because they are part of me. You don't see it. My life's so good, so pleasant, as it is, that I want to make it quite safe. Can't you understand?

M.—Perfectly. "Shelter-pit for the Orf'cer's charger," as they say in the Line.

G.—And I have everything to my hand to make it so. I'm sick of the strain and the worry for their sakes out here; and there isn't a single real difficulty to prevent my dropping it altogether. It'll only cost me . . . Jack, I hope you'll

never know the shame that I've been going through for the past six months.

M.—Hold on there! I don't wish to be told. Every man has his moods and tenses sometimes.

G.—(Laughing bitterly.) Has he? What do you call craning over to see where the near-fore lands?

M.—In my case it means that I have been on the Considerable Bend, and have come to parade with a Head and a Hand. It passes in three strides.

G.—(Lowering voice.) It *never* passes with me, Jack. I'm always thinking about it. Phil Gadsby funking a fall on parade! Sweet picture, isn't it! Draw it for me.

M.—(Gravely.) Heaven forbid! A man like you can't be as bad as that. A fall is no nice thing, but one never gives it a thought.

G.—Doesn't one? Wait till you've got a wife and a youngster of your own, and then you'll know how the roar of the squadron behind you turns you cold all up the back.

M.—(Aside.) And this man led at Amdheran after Bagal-Deasin went under, and we were all mixed up together, and he came out of the show dripping like a butcher! (Aloud.) Skittles! The men can always open out, and you can always pick your way more or less. *We* haven't the dust to bother us, as the men have, and who ever heard of a horse stepping on a man?

G.—Never—as long as he can see. But did they open out for poor Errington?

M.—Oh, this is childish!

G.—I know it is, and worse than that. I don't care. You've ridden Van Loo. Is he the sort of brute to pick his way—'specially when we're coming up in column of troop with any pace on?

M.—Once in a Blue Moon do we gallop in column of troop, and then only to save time. Aren't three lengths enough for you?

G.—Yes—quite enough. They just allow for the full development of the smash. I'm talking like a cur, I know;

but I tell you that, for the past three months, I've felt every hoof of the squadron in the small of my back every time that I've led.

M.—But, Gaddy, this is awful!

G.—Isn't it lovely? Isn't it royal? A Captain of the Pink Hussars watering up his charger before parade like the blasted boozing Colonel of a Black Regiment!

M.—You never did!

G.—Once only. He squelched like a *mussuck*, and the Troop-Sergeant-Major cocked his eye at me. You know old Haffy's eye. I was afraid to do it again.

M.—I should think so. That was the best way to rupture old Van Loo's tummy, and make him crumple you up. You *knew* that.

G.—I didn't care. It took the edge off him.

M.—"Took the edge off him?" Gaddy, you—you—you *mustn't*, you know! Think of the men.

G.—That's another thing I am afraid of. D'you s'pose they know?

M.—Let's hope not; but they're deadly quick to spot skrim—little things of that kind. See here, old man, send the wife Home for the hot weather and come to Kashmir with me. We'll start a boat on the Dal or cross the Rhotang—ibex or idleness—which you please. Only *come!* You're a bit off your oats and you're talking nonsense. Look at the Colonel—swag-bellied rascal that he is. He has a wife and no end of a bow-window of his own. Can any one of us ride round him—chalkstones and all? I can't, and I think I can shove a crock along a bit.

G.—Some men are different. I haven't the nerve. Lord help me, I haven't the nerve! I've taken up a hole and a half to get my knees well under the wallets. I can't help it. I'm so afraid of anything happening to me. On my soul, I ought to be broke in front of the squadron for cowardice.

M.—Ugly word, that. I should never have the courage to own up.

G.—I meant to lie about my reasons when I began, but—

I've got out of the habit of lying to you, old man. Jack, you won't? . . But I know you won't.

M.—Of course not. (Half aloud.) The Pinks are paying dearly for their Pride.

G.—Eh! Wha-at?

M.—Don't you know? We've called Mrs. Gadsby the Pride of the Pink Hussars ever since she came to us.

G.—'Tisn't *her* fault. Don't think that. It's all mine.

M.—What does she say?

G.—I haven't exactly put it before her. She's the best little woman in the world, Jack, and all that . . . but she wouldn't counsel a man to stick to his calling if it came between him and her. At least, I think . . .

M.—Never mind. Don't tell her what you told me. Go on the Peerage and Landed-Gentry tack.

G.—She'd see through it. She's five times cleverer than I am.

M.—(Aside.) Then she'll accept the sacrifice and think a little bit worse of him for the rest of her days.

G.—(Absently.) I say, do you despise me?

M.—'Queer way of putting it. Have you ever been asked that question? Think a minute. What answer used you to give?

G.—So bad as *that?* I'm not entitled to expect anything more; but it's a bit hard when one's best friend turns round and . . .

M.—So *I* have found. But you will have consolations—Bailiffs and Drains and Liquid Manure and the Primrose League, and, perhaps, if you're lucky, the Colonelcy of a Yeomanry Cav-al-ry Regiment—all uniform and no riding, I believe. How old are you?

G.—Thirty-three. I know it's . . .

M.—At forty you'll be a fool of a J. P. landlord. At fifty you'll own a bath-chair, and the Brigadier, if he takes after you, will be fluttering the dove-cotes of—what's the particular dunghill you're going to? Also, Mrs. Gadsby will be fat.

G.—(Limply.) This is rather more than a joke.

M.—D'you think so? Isn't cutting the Service a joke? It generally takes a man fifty years to arrive at it. You're quite right, though. It is more than a joke. You've managed it in thirty-three.

G.—Don't make me feel worse than I do. Will it satisfy you if I own that I am a shirker, a skrimshanker, and a coward?

M.—It will *not*, because I'm the only man in the world who can talk to you like this without being knocked down. You mustn't take all that I've said to heart in this way. I only spoke—a lot of it at least—out of pure selfishness because, because—oh, damn it all, old man—I don't know *what* I shall do without you. Of course, you've got the money and the place and all that—and there are two very good reasons why you should take care of yourself.

G.—'Doesn't make it any the sweeter. I'm backing out—I know I am. I always had a soft drop in me somewhere—and I daren't risk any danger to *them*.

M.—Why in the world should you? You're bound to think of your family—bound to think. Er-humm. If I wasn't a younger son I'd go too—be shot if I wouldn't!

G.—Thank you, Jack. It's a kind lie, but it's the blackest you've told for some time. I know what I'm doing, and I'm going into it with my eyes open. Old man, I *can't* help it. What would you do if you were in my place?

M.—(Aside.) 'Couldn't conceive any woman getting permanently between me and the Regiment. (Aloud.) 'Can't say. 'Very likely I should do no better. I'm sorry for you—awf'ly sorry—but "if them's your sentiments," I believe, I really do, that you are acting wisely.

G.—Do you? I hope you do. (In a whisper.) Jack, be very sure of yourself before you marry. I'm an ungrateful ruffian to say this, but marriage—even as good a marriage as mine has been—hampers a man's work, it cripples his sword-arm, and oh, it plays Hell with his notions of duty! Sometimes—good and sweet as she is—sometimes I could

wish that I had kept my freedom . . . No, I don't mean that exactly.

Mrs. G.—(Coming down veranda.) What are you wagging your head over, Pip?

M.—(Turning quickly.) Me, as usual. The old sermon. Your husband is recommending me to get married. 'Never saw such a one-ideaed man!

Mrs. G.—Well, why don't you? I daresay you would make some woman very happy.

G.—There's the Law and the Prophets, Jack. Never mind the Regiment. Make a woman happy. (Aside.) Oh, Lord!

M.—We'll see. I must be off to make a Troop Cook desperately unhappy. I won't have the wily Hussar fed on G. B. T. shinbones . . . (Hastily.) Surely black ants can't be good for the Brigadier. He's picking 'em off the *chitai* and eating 'em. Here, Señor Comandante Don Grubby-nose, come and talk to me. (Lifts G. junior in his arms.) 'Want my watch? You won't be able to put it into your mouth, but you can try. (G. junior drops watch, breaking dial and hands.)

Mrs. G.—Oh, Captain Mafflin, I *am* so sorry! Jack, you bad, bad little villain. Ahhh!

M.—It's not the least consequence, I assure you. He'd treat the world in the same way if he could get it into his hands. Everything's made to be played with and broken, isn't it, young 'un? (Tenderly.) "Oh, Diamond, Diamond, thou little knowest the mischief that thou hast done."

. . . . . .

Mrs. G.—Mafflin didn't at all like his watch being broken, though he was too polite to say so. It was entirely his fault for giving it to the child. Dem little puds are werry, weiry feeble, aren't dey, my Jack-in-the-box? (To G.) What did he want to see you for?

G.—Regimental shop o' sorts.

Mrs. G.—The Regiment! *Always* the Regiment. On my word, I sometimes feel jealous of Mafflin.

G.—(Wearily.) Poor old Jack! I don't think you need. Isn't it time for The *Butcha* to have his nap? Bring a chair out here, dear. I've got something to talk over with you.

AND THIS IS THE END OF THE STORY OF THE GADSBYS

L'ENVOI

WHAT is the moral? Who rides may read.
When the night is thick and the tracks are blind
A friend at a pinch is a friend indeed;
But a fool to wait for the laggard behind:
Down to Gehenna or up to the Throne
He travels the fastest who travels alone.

White hands cling to the tightened rein,
Slipping the spur from the booted heel,
Tenderest voices cry, "Turn again,"
Red lips tarnish the scabbarded steel:
High hopes faint on a warm hearthstone—
He travels the fastest who travels alone.

One may fall but he falls by himself—
Falls by himself with himself to blame;
One may attain and to him is the pelf,
Loot of the city in Gold or Fame:
Plunder of earth shall be all his own
Who travels the fastest and travels alone.

Wherefore the more ye be holpen and stayed—
Stayed by a friend in the hour of toil,
Sing the heretical song I have made—
His be the labor and yours be the spoil.
Win by his aid and the aid disown—
He travels the fastest who travels alone.

THE

PHANTOM 'RICKSHAW

AND OTHER TALES

PREFACE

THIS is not exactly a book of downright ghost stories as the title makes believe. It is rather a collection of facts that never quite explained themselves. All that the collector is certain of is, that one man insisted upon dying because he believed himself to be haunted; another man either made up a wonderful lie and stuck to it, or visited a very strange place; while the third man was indubitably crucified by some person or persons unknown, and gave an extraordinary account of himself.

The peculiarity of ghost stories is that they are never told first-hand. I have managed, with infinite trouble, to secure one exception to this rule. It is not a very good specimen, but you can credit it from beginning to end. The other three stories you must take on trust; as I did.

RUDYARD KIPLING.

THE PHANTOM 'RICKSHAW

May no ill dreams disturb my rest,
Nor Powers of Darkness me molest.
—*Evening Hymn*

ONE of the few advantages that India has over England is a great knowability. After five years' service a man is directly or indirectly acquainted with the two or three hun-

dred civilians in his province, all the messes of ten or twelve regiments and batteries, and some fifteen hundred other people of the non-official caste. In ten years his knowledge should be doubled, and at the end of twenty he knows, or knows something about, every Englishman in the empire, and may travel anywhere and everywhere without paying hotel bills.

Globe-trotters who expect entertainment as a right, have, even within my memory, blunted this open-heartedness, but none the less to-day, if you belong to the inner circle and are neither a bear nor a black sheep, all houses are open to you, and our small world is very, very kind and helpful.

Rickett of Kamartha stayed with Polder of Kumaon some fifteen years ago. He meant to stay two nights, but was knocked down by rheumatic fever, and for six weeks disorganized Polder's establishment, stopped Polder's work, and nearly died in Polder's bedroom. Polder behaves as though he had been placed under eternal obligation by Rickett, and yearly sends the little Ricketts a box of presents and toys. It is the same everywhere. The men who do not take the trouble to conceal from you their opinion that you are an incompetent ass, and the women who blacken your character and misunderstand your wife's amusements, will work themselves to the bone in your behalf if you fall sick or into serious trouble.

Heatherlegh, the doctor, kept, in addition to his regular practice, a hospital on his private account—an arrangement of loose boxes for incurables, his friend called it—but it was really a sort of fitting-up shed for craft that had been damaged by stress of weather. The weather in India is often sultry, and since the tale of bricks is always a fixed quantity, and the only liberty allowed is permission to work overtime and get no thanks, men occasionally break down and become as mixed as the metaphors in this sentence.

Heatherlegh is the dearest doctor that ever was, and his invariable prescription to all his patients is, "lie low, go slow, and keep cool." He says that more men are killed by over-

work than the importance of this world justifies. He maintains that overwork slew Pansay, who died under his hands about three years ago. He has, of course, the right to speak authoritatively, and he laughs at my theory that there was a crack in Pansay's head and a little bit of the Dark World came through and pressed him to death. "Pansay went off the handle," says Heatherlegh, "after the stimulus of long leave at home. He may or he may not have behaved like a blackguard to Mrs. Keith-Wessington. My notion is that the work of the Katabundi settlement ran him off his legs, and that he took to brooding and making much of an ordinary P. & O. flirtation. He certainly was engaged to Miss Mannering, and she certainly broke off the engagement. Then he took a feverish chill and all that nonsense about ghosts developed. Overwork started his illness, kept it alight, and killed him, poor devil. Write him off to the system—one man to take the work of two and a half men."

I do not believe this. I used to sit up with Pansay sometimes when Heatherlegh was called out to patients, and I happened to be within claim. The man would make me most unhappy by describing in a low, even voice, the procession that was always passing at the bottom of his bed. He had a sick man's command of language. When he recovered I suggested that he should write out the whole affair from beginning to end, knowing that ink might assist him to ease his mind. When little boys have learned a new bad word they are never happy till they have chalked it up on a door. And this also is literature.

He was in a high fever while he was writing, and the blood-and-thunder magazine diction he adopted did not calm him. Two months afterward he was reported fit for duty, but, in spite of the fact that he was urgently needed to help an undermanned commission stagger through a deficit, he preferred to die; vowing at the last that he was hag-ridden. I got his manuscript before he died, and this is his version of the affair, dated 1885:

My doctor tells me that I need rest and change of air. It is not improbable that I shall get both ere long—rest that neither the red-coated messenger nor the midday gun can break, and change of air far beyond that which any homeward-bound steamer can give me. In the meantime I am resolved to stay where I am; and, in flat defiance of my doctor's orders, to take all the world into my confidence. You shall learn for yourselves the precise nature of my malady; and shall, too, judge for yourselves whether any man born of woman on this weary earth was ever so tormented as I.

Speaking now as a condemned criminal might speak ere the drop-bolts are drawn, my story, wild and hideously improbable as it may appear, demands at least attention. That it will ever receive credence I utterly disbelieve. Two months ago I should have scouted as mad or drunk the man who had dared tell me the like. Two months ago I was the happiest man in India. To-day, from Peshawer to the sea, there is no one more wretched. My doctor and I are the only two who know this. His explanation is, that my brain, digestion, and eyesight are all slightly affected; giving rise to my frequent and persistent "delusions." Delusions, indeed! I call him a fool; but he attends me still with the same unwearied smile, the same bland professional manner, the same neatly trimmed red whiskers, till I begin to suspect that I am an ungrateful, evil-tempered invalid. But you shall judge for yourselves.

Three years ago it was my fortune—my great misfortune—to sail from Gravesend to Bombay, on return from long leave, with one Agnes Keith-Wessington, wife of an officer on the Bombay side. It does not in the least concern you to know what manner of woman she was. Be content with the knowledge that, ere the voyage had ended, both she and I were desperately and unreasoningly in love with each other. Heaven knows that I can make the admission now without one particle of vanity. In matters of this sort there is always one who gives and another who accepts. From the first day of our ill-omened attachment, I was conscious that

Agnes's passion was a stronger, a more dominant, and—if I may use the expression—a purer sentiment than mine. Whether she recognized the fact then, I do not know. Afterward it was bitterly plain to both of us.

Arrived at Bombay in the spring of the year, we went our respective ways, to meet no more for the next three or four months, when my leave and her love took us both to Simla. There we spent the season together; and there my fire of straw burned itself out to a pitiful end with the closing year. I attempt no excuse. I make no apology. Mrs. Wessington had given up much for my sake, and was prepared to give up all. From my own lips, in August, 1882, she learned that I was sick of her presence, tired of her company, and weary of the sound of her voice. Ninety-nine women out of a hundred would have wearied of me as I wearied of them; seventy-five of that number would have promptly avenged themselves by active and obtrusive flirtation with other men. Mrs. Wessington was the hundredth. On her neither my openly expressed aversion nor the cutting brutalities with which I garnished our interviews had the least effect.

"Jack darling!" was her one eternal cuckoo cry, "I'm sure it's all a mistake—a hideous mistake; and we'll be good friends again some day. *Please* forgive me, Jack dear."

I was the offender, and I knew it. That knowledge transformed my pity into passive endurance, and, eventually, into blind hate—the same instinct, I suppose, which prompts a man to savagely stamp on the spider he has but half killed. And with this hate in my bosom the season of 1882 came to an end.

Next year we met again at Simla—she with her monotonous face and timid attempts at reconciliation, and I with loathing of her in every fiber of my frame. Several times I could not avoid meeting her alone; and on each occasion her words were identically the same. Still the unreasoning wail that it was all a "mistake"; and still the hope of eventually "making friends." I might have seen, had I cared to look,

that that hope only was keeping her alive. She grew more wan and thin month by month. You will agree with me, at least, that such conduct would have driven any one to despair. It was uncalled for; childish; unwomanly. I maintain that she was much to blame. And again, sometimes, in the black, fever-stricken night-watches, I have begun to think that I might have been a little kinder to her. But that really *is* a "delusion." I could not have continued pretending to love her when I didn't; could I? It would have been unfair to us both.

Last year we met again—on the same terms as before. The same weary appeals, and the same curt answers from my lips. At least I would make her see how wholly wrong and hopeless were her attempts at resuming the old relationship. As the season worn on, we fell apart—that is to say, she found it difficult to meet me, for I had other and more absorbing interests to attend to. When I think it over quietly in my sick-room, the season of 1884 seems a confused nightmare wherein light and shade were fantastically intermingled—my courtship of little Kitty Mannering; my hopes, doubts, and fears; our long rides together; my trembling avowal of attachment; her reply; and now and again a vision of a white face flitting by in the 'rickshaw with the black and white liveries I once watched for so earnestly; the wave of Mrs. Wessington's gloved hand; and, when she met me alone, which was but seldom, the irksome monotony of her appeal. I loved Kitty Mannering; honestly, heartily loved her, and with my love for her grew my hatred for Agnes. In August, Kitty and I were engaged. The next day I met those accursed "magpie" *jhampanies* at the back of Jakko, and, moved by some passing sentiment of pity, stopped to tell Mrs. Wessington everything. She knew it already.

"So I hear you're engaged, Jack dear." Then, without a moment's pause—"I'm sure it's all a mistake—a hideous mistake. We shall be as good friends some day, Jack, as we ever were."

My answer might have made even a man wince. It cut the dying woman before me like the blow of a whip. "Please forgive me, Jack; I didn't mean to make you angry; but it's true, it's true!"

And Mrs. Wessington broke down completely. I turned away and left her to finish her journey in peace, feeling, but only for a moment or two, that I had been an unutterably mean hound. I looked back, and saw that she had turned her 'rickshaw with the idea, I suppose, of overtaking me.

The scene and its surroundings were photographed on my memory. The rain-swept sky (we were at the end of the wet weather), the sodden, dingy pines, the muddy road, and the black powder-riven cliffs formed a gloomy background against which the black and white liveries of the *jhampanies*, the yellow-paneled 'rickshaw and Mrs. Wessington's down-bowed golden head stood out clearly. She was holding her handkerchief in her left hand and was leaning back exhausted against the 'rickshaw cushions. I turned my horse up a by-path near the Sanjowlie Reservoir and literally ran away. Once I fancied I heard a faint call of "Jack!" This may have been imagination. I never stopped to verify it. Ten minutes later I came across Kitty on horseback; and, in the delight of a long ride with her, forgot all about the interview.

A week later Mrs. Wessington died, and the inexpressible burden of her existence was removed from my life. I went plainsward perfectly happy. Before three months were over I had forgotten all about her, except that at times the discovery of some of her old letters reminded me unpleasantly of our by-gone relationship. By January I had disinterred what was left of our correspondence from among my scattered belongings and had burned it. At the beginning of April of this year, 1885, I was at Simla—semi-deserted Simla—once more, and was deep in lover's talks and walks with Kitty. It was decided that we should be married at the end of June. You will understand, therefore, that, loving Kitty

as I did, I am not saying too much when I pronounce myself to have been, at that time, the happiest man in India.

Fourteen delightful days passed almost before I noticed their flight. Then, aroused to the sense of what was proper among mortals circumstanced as we were, I pointed out to Kitty that an engagement-ring was the outward and visible sign of her dignity as an engaged girl; and that she must forthwith come to Hamilton's to be measured for one. Up to that moment, I give you my word, we had completely forgotten so trivial a matter. To Hamilton's we accordingly went on the 15th of April, 1885. Remember that—whatever my doctor may say to the contrary—I was then in perfect health, enjoying a well-balanced mind and an *absolutely* tranquil spirit. Kitty and I entered Hamilton's shop together, and there, regardless of the order of affairs, I measured Kitty for the ring in the presence of the amused assistant. The ring was a sapphire with two diamonds. We then rode out down the slope that leads to the Combermere Bridge and Peliti's shop.

While my waler was cautiously feeling his way over the loose shale, and Kitty was laughing and chattering at my side—while all Simla, that is to say as much of it as had then come from the plains, was grouped round the reading-room and Peliti's veranda—I was aware that some one, apparently at a vast distance, was calling me by my Christian name. It struck me that I had heard the voice before, but when and where I could not at once determine. In the short space it took to cover the road between the path from Hamilton's shop and the first plank of the Combermere Bridge I had thought over half a dozen people who might have committed such a solecism, and had eventually decided that it must have been some singing in my ears. Immediately opposite Peliti's shop my eye was arrested by the sight of four *jhampanies* in "magpie" livery, pulling a yellow-paneled, cheap, bazaar 'rickshaw. In a moment my mind flew back to the previous season and Mrs. Wessington with a sense of irritation and disgust. Was it not enough that

Drawn by WALTER RUSSELL.

"*Horse and rider passed through men and carriage as if they had been thin air.*"

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the woman was dead and done with, without her black and white servitors reappearing to spoil the day's happiness? Whoever employed them now I thought I would call upon, and ask as a personal favor to change her *jhampanies'* livery. I would hire the men myself, and, if necessary, buy their coats from off their backs. It is impossible to say here what a flood of undesirable memories their presence evoked.

"Kitty," I cried, "there are poor Mrs. Wessington's *jhampanies* turned up again! I wonder who has them now?"

Kitty had known Mrs. Wessington slightly last season, and had always been interested in the sickly woman.

"What? Where?" she asked. "I can't see them anywhere."

Even as she spoke, her horse, swerving from a laden mule, threw himself directly in front of the advancing 'rickshaw. I had scarcely time to utter a word of warning when, to my unutterable horror, horse and rider passed *through* men and carriage as if they had been thin air.

"What's the matter?" cried Kitty; "what made you call out so foolishly, Jack? If I *am* engaged I don't want all creation to know about it. There was lots of space between the mule and the veranda; and, if you think I can't ride—There!"

Whereupon willful Kitty set off, her dainty little head in the air, at a hand-gallop in the direction of the band-stand; fully expecting, as she herself afterward told me, that I should follow her. What was the matter? Nothing indeed. Either that I was mad or drunk, or that Simla was haunted with devils. I reined in my impatient cob, and turned round. The 'rickshaw had turned too, and now stood immediately facing me, near the left railing of the Combermere Bridge.

"Jack! Jack darling!" (There was no mistake about the words this time; they rang through my brain as if they had been shouted in my ear.) "It's some hideous mistake, I'm sure. *Please* forgive me, Jack, and let's be friends again."

The 'rickshaw-hood had fallen back, and inside, as I hope and pray daily for the death I dread by night, sat Mrs. Keith-Wessington, handkerchief in hand, and golden head bowed on her breast.

How long I stared motionless I do not know. Finally, I was aroused by my syce taking the waler's bridle and asking whether I was ill. From the horrible to the commonplace is but a step. I tumbled off my horse and dashed, half fainting, into Peliti's for a glass of cherry brandy. There two or three couples were gathered round the coffee-tables discussing the gossip of the day. Their trivialities were more comforting to me just then than the consolations of religion could have been. I plunged into the midst of the conversation at once; chatted, laughed, and jested with a face (when I caught a glimpse of it in a mirror, as white and drawn as that of a corpse. Three or four men noticed my condition; and, evidently setting it down to the results of overmany pegs, charitably endeavored to draw me apart from the rest of the loungers. But I refused to be led away. I wanted the company of my kind—as a child rushes into the midst of the dinner-party after a fright in the dark. I must have talked for about ten minutes or so, though it seemed an eternity to me, when I heard Kitty's clear voice outside inquiring for me. In another minute she had entered the shop, prepared to roundly upbraid me for failing so signally in my duties. Something in my face stopped her.

"Why, Jack," she cried, "what *have* you been doing? What *has* happened? Are you ill?" Thus driven into a direct lie, I said that the sun had been a little too much for me. It was close upon five o'clock of a cloudy April afternoon, and the sun had been hidden all day. I saw my mistake as soon as the words were out of my mouth; attempted to recover it; blundered hopelessly and followed Kitty, in a regal rage, out-of-doors, amid the smiles of my acquaintances. I made some excuse (I have forgotten what) on the score of my feeling faint; and cantered away to my hotel, leaving Kitty to finish the ride by herself.

In my room I sat down and tried calmly to reason out the matter. Here was I, Theobald Jack Pansay, a well-educated Bengal civilian in the year of grace 1885, presumably sane, certainly healthy, driven in terror from my sweetheart's side by the apparition of a woman who had been dead and buried eight months ago. These were facts that I could not blink. Nothing was further from my thought than any memory of Mrs. Wessington when Kitty and I left Hamilton's shop. Nothing was more utterly commonplace than the stretch of wall opposite Peliti's. It was broad daylight. The road was full of people; and yet here, look you, in defiance of every law of probability, in direct outrage of Nature's ordinance, there had appeared to me a face from the grave.

Kitty's Arab had gone *through* the 'rickshaw; so that my first hope that some woman marvelously like Mrs. Wessington had hired the carriage and the coolies with their old livery was lost. Again and again I went round this treadmill of thought; and again and again gave up, baffled and in despair. The voice was as inexplicable as the apparition. I had originally some wild notion of confiding it all to Kitty; of begging her to marry me at once; and in her arms defying the ghostly occupant of the 'rickshaw. "After all," I argued, "the presence of the 'rickshaw is in itself enough to prove the existence of a spectral illusion. One may see ghosts of men and women, but surely never of coolies and carriages. The whole thing is absurd. Fancy the ghost of a hill-man!"

Next morning I sent a penitent note to Kitty, imploring her to overlook my strange conduct of the previous afternoon. My divinity was still very wroth, and a personal apology was necessary. I explained, with a fluency born of night-long pondering over a falsehood, that I had been attacked with a sudden palpitation of the heart—the result of indigestion. This eminently practical solution had its effect; and Kitty and I rode out that afternoon with the shadow of my first lie dividing us.

Nothing could please her save a canter round Jakko.

With my nerves still unstrung from the previous night, I feebly protested against the notion, suggesting Observatory Hill, Jutogh, the Boileaugunge road—anything rather than the Jakko round. Kitty was angry and a little hurt; so I yielded from fear of provoking further misunderstanding, and we set out together toward Chota Simla. We walked a greater part of the way, and, according to our custom, cantered from a mile or so below the convent to the stretch of level road by the Sanjowlie Reservoir. The wretched horses appeared to fly, and my heart beat quicker and quicker as we neared the crest of the ascent. My mind had been full of Mrs. Wessington all the afternoon; and every inch of the Jakko road bore witness to our old-time walks and talks. The bowlders were full of it; the pines sung it aloud overhead; the rain-fed torrent giggled and chuckled unseen over the shameful story; and the wind in my ears chanted the iniquity aloud.

As a fitting climax, in the middle of the level men call the Lady's Mile the horror was awaiting me. No other 'rickshaw was in sight—only the four black and white *jhampanies*, the yellow-paneled carriage, and the golden head of the woman within—all apparently just as I had left them eight months and one fortnight ago! For an instant I fancied that Kitty *must* see what I saw—we were so marvelously sympathetic in all things. Her next words undeceived me—"Not a soul in sight! Come along, Jack, and I'll race you to the reservoir buildings!" Her wiry little Arab was off like a bird, my waler following close behind, and in this order we dashed under the cliffs. Half a minute brought us within fifty yards of the 'rickshaw. I pulled my waler and fell back a little. The 'rickshaw was directly in the middle of the road; and once more the Arab passed through it, my horse following. "Jack! Jack dear! *Please* forgive me," rang with a wail in my ears, and, after an interval: "It's all a mistake, a hideous mistake!"

I spurred my horse like a man possessed. When I turned my head at the reservoir works, the black and white liveries

were still waiting—patiently waiting—under the gray hillside, and the wind brought me a mocking echo of the words I had just heard. Kitty bantered me a good deal on my silence throughout the remainder of the ride. I had been talking up till then wildly and at random. To save my life I could not speak naturally afterward, and from Sanjowlie to the church wisely held my tongue.

I was to dine with the Mannerings that night, and had barely time to canter home to dress. On the road to Elysium Hill I overheard two men talking together in the dusk—"It's a curious thing," said one, "how completely all trace of it disappeared. You know my wife was insanely fond of the woman (never could see anything in her myself), and wanted me to pick up her old 'rickshaw and coolies if they were to be got for love or money. Morbid sort of fancy I call it; but I've got to do what the *Memsahib* tells me. Would you believe that the man she hired it from tells me that all four of the men—they were brothers—died of cholera on the way to Hardwar, poor devils; and the 'rickshaw has been broken up by the man himself. Told me he never used a dead *Memsahib's* 'rickshaw. Spoiled his luck. Queer notion, wasn't it? Fancy poor little Mrs. Wessington spoiling any one's luck except her own!" I laughed aloud at this point; and my laugh jarred on me as I uttered it. So there *were* ghosts of 'rickshaws after all, and ghostly employments in the other world! How much did Mrs. Wessington give her men? What were their hours? Where did they go?

And for visible answer to my last question I saw the infernal thing blocking my path in the twilight. The dead travel fast, and by short cuts unknown to ordinary coolies. I laughed aloud a second time and checked my laughter suddenly, for I was afraid I was going mad. Mad to a certain extent I must have been, for I recollect that I reined in my horse at the head of the 'rickshaw, and politely wished Mrs. Wessington "Good-evening." Her answer was one I knew only too well. I listened to the end; and replied that I had heard it all before, but should be delighted if she had

anything further to say. Some malignant devil stronger than I must have entered into me that evening, for I have a dim recollection of talking the commonplaces of the day for five minutes to the thing in front of me.

"Mad as a hatter, poor devil—or drunk. Max, try and get him to come home."

Surely *that* was not Mrs. Wessington's voice! The two men had overheard me speaking to the empty air, and had returned to look after me. They were very kind and considerate, and from their words evidently gathered that I was extremely drunk. I thanked them confusedly and cantered away to my hotel, there changed, and arrived at the Mannerings' ten minutes late. I pleaded the darkness of the night as an excuse; was rebuked by Kitty for my unloverlike tardiness; and sat down.

The conversation had already become general; and under cover of it I was addressing some tender small-talk to my sweetheart when I was aware that at the further end of the table a short, red-whiskered man was describing, with much broidery, his encounter with a man unknown that evening. A few sentences convinced me that he was repeating the incident of half an hour ago. In the middle of the story he looked round for applause, as professional story-tellers do, caught my eyes, and straightway collapsed. There was a moment's awkward silence, and the red-whiskered man muttered something to the effect that he had "forgotten the rest," thereby sacrificing a reputation as a good story-teller which he had built up for six seasons past. I blessed him from the bottom of my heart, and—went on with my fish.

In the fullness of time that dinner came to an end; and with genuine regret I tore myself away from Kitty—as certain as I was of my own existence that It would be waiting for me outside the door. The red-whiskered man, who had been introduced to me as Dr. Heatherlegh of Simla, volunteered to bear me company as far as our roads lay together. I accepted his offer with gratitude.

My instinct had not deceived me. It lay in readiness in

the Mall, and, in what seemed devilish mockery of our ways, with a lighted head-lamp. The red-whiskered man went to the point at once, in a manner that showed he had been thinking over it all dinner-time.

"I say, Pansay, what the deuce was the matter with you this evening on the Elysium road?" The suddenness of the question wrenched an answer from me before I was aware.

"That!" said I, pointing to It.

"*That* may be either D. T. or Eyes for aught I know. Now, you don't liquor. I saw as much at dinner, so it can't be D. T. There's nothing whatever where you're pointing, though you're sweating and trembling with fright like a scarced pony. Therefore, I conclude that it's Eyes. And I ought to understand all about them. Come along home with me. I'm on the Blessington lower road."

To my intense delight the 'rickshaw, instead of waiting for us, kept about twenty yards ahead—and this, too, whether we walked, trotted, or cantered. In the course of that long night ride I had told my companion almost as much as I have told you here.

"Well, you've spoiled one of the best tales I've ever laid tongue to," said he, "but I'll forgive you for the sake of what you've gone through. Now, come home and do what I tell you; and when I've cured you, young man, let this be a lesson to you to steer clear of women and indigestible food till the day of your death."

The 'rickshaw kept steady in front; and my red-whiskered friend seemed to derive great pleasure from my account of its exact whereabout.

"Eyes, Pansay—all Eyes, Brain, and Stomach. And the greatest of these three is Stomach. You've too much conceited brain, too little stomach, and thoroughly unhealthy eyes. Get your stomach straight and the rest follows. And all that's French for a liver pill. I'll take sole medical charge of you from this hour! for you're too interesting a phenomenon to be passed over."

By this time we were deep in the shadow of the Blessing-

ton lower road and the 'rickshaw came to a dead stop under a pine-clad, overhanging shale cliff. Instinctively I halted too, giving my reason. Heatherlegh rapped out an oath.

"Now, if you think I'm going to spend a cold night on the hillside for the sake of a Stomach-*cum*-Brain-*cum*-Eye illusion . . . Lord ha' mercy! What's that?"

There was a muffled report, a blinding smother of dust just in front of us, a crack, the noise of rent boughs, and about ten yards of the cliff-side—pines, undergrowth, and all—slid down into the road below, completely blocking it up. The uprooted trees swayed and tottered for a moment like drunken giants in the gloom, and then fell prone among their fellows with a thunderous crash. Our two horses stood motionless and sweating with fear. As soon as the rattle of falling earth and stone had subsided, my companion muttered: "Man, if we'd gone forward we should have been ten feet deep in our graves by now. 'There are more things in heaven and earth—' Come home, Pansay, and thank God. I want a peg badly."

We retraced our way over the Church Ridge, and I arrived at Dr. Heatherlegh's house shortly after midnight.

His attempts toward my cure commenced almost immediately, and for a week I never left his sight. Many a time in the course of that week did I bless the good fortune which had thrown me in contact with Simla's best and kindest doctor. Day by day my spirits grew lighter and more equable. Day by day, too, I became more and more inclined to fall in with Heatherlegh's "spectral illusion" theory, implicating eyes, brain, and stomach. I wrote to Kitty, telling her that a slight sprain caused by a fall from my horse kept me indoors for a few days; and that I should be recovered before she had time to regret my absence.

Heatherlegh's treatment was simple to a degree. It consisted of liver pills, cold water baths, and strong exercise, taken in the dusk or at early dawn—for, as he sagely observed: "A man with a sprained ankle doesn't walk a dozen

miles a day, and your young woman might be wondering if she saw you."

At the end of the week, after much examination of pupil and pulse, and strict injunctions as to diet and pedestrianism, Heatherlegh dismissed me as brusquely as he had taken charge of me. Here is his parting benediction: "Man, I certify to your mental cure, and that's as much as to say I've cured most of your bodily ailments. Now, get your traps out of this as soon as you can; and be off to make love to Miss Kitty."

I was endeavoring to express my thanks for his kindness. He cut me short.

"Don't think I did this because I like you. I gather that you've behaved like a blackguard all through. But, all the same, you're a phenomenon, and as queer a phenomenon as you are a blackguard. No!"—checking me a second time—"not a rupee, please. Go out and see if you can find the eyes-brain-and-stomach business again. I'll give you a lakh for each time you see it."

Half an hour later I was in the Mannerings' drawing-room with Kitty—drunk with the intoxication of present happiness and the foreknowledge that I should never more be troubled with Its hideous presence. Strong in the sense of my new-found security, I proposed a ride at once; and, by preference, a canter round Jakko.

Never had I felt so well, so overladen with vitality and mere animal spirits, as I did on the afternoon of the 30th of April. Kitty was delighted at the change in my appearance, and complimented me on it in her delightfully frank and outspoken manner. We left the Mannerings' house together, laughing and talking, and cantered along the Chota Simla road as of old.

I was in haste to reach the Sanjowlie Reservoir and there make my assurance doubly sure. The horses did their best, but seemed all too slow to my impatient mind. Kitty was astonished at my boisterousness. "Why, Jack!" she cried at last, "you are behaving like a child. What are you doing?"

We were just below the convent, and from sheer wantonness I was making my waler plunge and curvet across the road as I tickled it with the loop of my riding-whip.

"Doing?" I answered; "nothing, dear. That's just it. If you'd been doing nothing for a week except lie up, you'd be as riotous as I.

" 'Singing and murmuring in your feastful mirth,
Joying to feel yourself alive;
Lord over Nature, Lord of the visible Earth,
Lord of the senses five.' "

My quotation was hardly out of my lips before we had rounded the corner above the convent, and a few yards further on could see across to Sanjowlie. In the center of the level road stood the black and white liveries, the yellow-paneled 'rickshaw, and Mrs. Keith-Wessington. I pulled up, looked, rubbed my eyes, and, I believe, must have said something. The next thing I knew was that I was lying face downward on the road, with Kitty kneeling above me in tears.

"Has it gone, child?" I gasped. Kitty only wept more bitterly.

"Has what gone, Jack dear? What does it all mean? There must be a mistake somewhere, Jack. A hideous mistake." Her last words brought me to my feet—mad—raving for the time being.

"Yes, there is a mistake somewhere," I repeated, "a hideous mistake. Come and look at It."

I have an indistinct idea that I dragged Kitty by the wrist along the road up to where It stood, and implored her for pity's sake to speak to It; to tell It that we were betrothed; that neither death nor hell could break the tie between us; and Kitty only knows how much more to the same effect. Now and again I appealed passionately to the terror in the 'rickshaw to bear witness to all I had said, and to release me from a torture that was killing me. As I talked I suppose I must have told Kitty of my old relations with Mrs. Wessing-

ton, for I saw her listen intently with white face and blazing eyes.

"Thank you, Mr. Pansay," she said, "that's *quite* enough. *Syce ghora láo.*"

The syces, impassive as Orientals always are, had come up with the recaptured horses; and as Kitty sprung into her saddle I caught hold of the bridle, entreating her to hear me out and forgive. My answer was the cut of her riding-whip across my face from mouth to eye, and a word or two of farewell that even now I cannot write down. So I judged, and judged rightly, that Kitty knew all; and I staggered back to the side of the 'rickshaw. My face was cut and bleeding, and the blow of the riding-whip had raised a livid blue wheal on it. I had no self-respect. Just then, Heatherlegh, who must have been following Kitty and me at a distance, cantered up.

"Doctor," I said, pointing to my face, "here's Miss Mannering's signature to my order of dismissal, and I'll thank you for that lakh as soon as convenient."

Heatherlegh's face, even in my abject misery, moved me to laughter.

"I'll stake my professional reputation—" he began.

"Don't be a fool," I whispered. "I've lost my life's happiness and you'd better take me home."

As I spoke the 'rickshaw was gone. Then I lost all knowledge of what was passing. The crest of Jakko seemed to heave and roll like the crest of a cloud and fall in upon me.

Seven days later (on the 7th of May, that is to say) I was aware that I was lying in Heatherlegh's room as weak as a little child. Heatherlegh was watching me intently from behind the papers on his writing-table. His first words were not encouraging; but I was too far spent to be much moved by them.

"Here's Miss Kitty has sent back your letters. You corresponded a good deal, you young people. Here's a packet that looks like a ring, and a cheerful sort of a note from Man-

nering Papa, which I've taken the liberty of reading and burning. The old gentleman's not pleased with you."

"And Kitty?" I asked dully.

"Rather more drawn than her father from what she says. By the same token you must have been letting out any number of queer reminiscences just before I met you. Says that a man who would have behaved to a woman as you did to Mrs. Wessington ought to kill himself out of sheer pity for his kind. She's a hot-headed little virago, your mash. Will have it too that you were suffering from D. T. when that row on the Jakko road turned up. Says she'll die before she ever speaks to you again."

I groaned and turned over on the other side.

"Now, you've got your choice, my friend. This engagement has to be broken off; and the Mannerings don't want to be too hard on you. Was it broken through D. T. or epileptic fits? Sorry I can't offer you a better exchange unless you'd prefer hereditary insanity. Say the word and I'll tell 'em it's fits. All Simla knows about that scene on the Ladies' Mile. Come! I'll give you five minutes to think over it."

During those five minutes I believe that I explored thoroughly the lowest circles of the Inferno which it is permitted man to tread on earth. And at the same time I myself was watching myself faltering through the dark labyrinths of doubt, misery, and utter despair. I wondered, as Heatherlegh in his chair might have wondered, which dreadful alternative I should adopt. Presently I heard myself answering in a voice that I hardly recognized:

"They're confoundedly particular about morality in these parts. Give 'em fits, Heatherlegh, and my love. Now, let me sleep a bit longer."

Then my two selves joined, and it was only I (half crazed, devil-driven I) that tossed in my bed, tracing step by step the history of the past month.

"But I am in Simla," I kept repeating to myself. "I, Jack Pansay, am in Simla, and there are no ghosts here. It's unreasonable of that woman to pretend there are. Why

couldn't Agnes have left me alone? I never did her any harm. It might just as well have been me as Agnes. Only I'd never have come back on purpose to kill *her*. Why can't I be left alone—left alone and happy?"

It was high noon when I first awoke; and the sun was low in the sky before I slept—slept as the tortured criminal sleeps on his rack, too worn to feel further pain.

Next day I could not leave my bed. Heatherlegh told me in the morning that he had received an answer from Mr. Mannering, and that, thanks to his (Heatherlegh's) friendly offices, the story of my affliction had traveled through the length and breadth of Simla, where I was on all sides much pitied.

"And that's rather more than you deserve," he concluded, pleasantly, "though the Lord knows you've been going through a pretty severe mill. Never mind; we'll cure you yet, you perverse phenomenon."

I declined firmly to be cured. "You've been much too good to me already, old man," said I; "but I don't think I need trouble you further."

In my heart I knew that nothing Heatherlegh could do would lighten the burden that had been laid upon me.

With that knowledge came also a sense of hopeless, impotent rebellion against the unreasonableness of it all. There were scores of men no better than I whose punishments had at least been reserved for another world; and I felt that it was bitterly, cruelly unfair that I alone should have been singled out for so hideous a fate. This mood would in time give place to another where it seemed that the 'rickshaw and I were the only realities in a world of shadows; that Kitty was a ghost; that Mannering, Heatherlegh, and all the other men and women I knew were all ghosts; and the great, gray hills themselves but vain shadows devised to torture me. From mood to mood I tossed backward and forward for seven weary days; my body growing daily stronger and stronger, until the bedroom looking-glass told me that I had returned to every day life, and was as other men once

more. Curiously enough my face showed no signs of the struggle I had gone through. It was pale indeed, but as expressionless and commonplace as ever. I had expected some permanent alteration—visible evidence of the disease that was eating me away. I found nothing.

On the 15th of May I left Heatherlegh's house at eleven o'clock in the morning; and the instinct of the bachelor drove me to the club. There I found that every man knew my story as told by Heatherlegh, and was, in clumsy fashion, abnormally kind and attentive. Nevertheless, I recognized that for the rest of my natural life I should be among but not of my fellows; and I envied very bitterly indeed the laughing coolies on the Mall below. I lunched at the club, and at four o'clock wandered aimlessly down the Mall in the vague hope of meeting Kitty. Close to the band-stand the black and white liveries joined me; and I heard Mrs. Wessington's old appeal at my side. I had been expecting this ever since I came out; and was only surprised at her delay. The phantom 'rickshaw and I went side by side along the Chota Simla road in silence. Close to the bazaar, Kitty and a man on horseback overtook and passed us. For any sign she gave I might have been a dog in the road. She did not even pay me the compliment of quickening her pace; though the rainy afternoon had served for an excuse.

So Kitty and her companion, and I and my ghostly light-o'-love, crept round Jakko in couples. The road was streaming with water; the pines dripped like roof-pipes on the rocks below, and the air was full of fine, driving rain. Two or three times I found myself saying to myself almost aloud: "I'm Jack Pansay on leave at Simla—*at Simla!* Every-day, ordinary Simla. I mustn't forget that—I mustn't forget that." Then I would try to recollect some of the gossip I had heard at the club; the prices of So-and-So's horses—anything, in fact, that related to the workaday Anglo-Indian world I knew so well. I even repeated the multiplication table rapidly to myself, to make quite sure that I was not taking leave of my senses. It gave me much comfort; and

must have prevented my hearing Mrs. Wessington for a time.

Once more I wearily climbed the convent slope and entered the level road. Here Kitty and the man started off at a canter, and I was left alone with Mrs. Wessington. "Agnes," said I, "will you put back your hood and tell me what it all means?" The hood dropped noiselessly, and I was face to face with my dead and buried mistress. She was wearing the dress in which I had last seen her alive; carried the same tiny handkerchief in her right hand, and the same card-case in her left. (A woman eight months dead with a card-case!) I had to pin myself down to the multiplication table, and to set both hands on the stone parapet of the road, to assure myself that at least was real.

"Agnes," I repeated, "for pity's sake tell me what it all means." Mrs. Wessington leaned forward, with that odd, quick turn of the head I used to know so well, and spoke.

If my story had not already so madly overleaped the bounds of all human belief I should apologize to you now. As I know that no one—no, not even Kitty, for whom it is written as some sort of justification of my conduct—will believe me, I will go on. Mrs. Wessington spoke and I walked with her from the Sanjowlie road to the turning below the commander-in-chief's house as I might walk by the side of any living woman's 'rickshaw, deep in conversation. The second and most tormenting of my moods of sickness had suddenly laid hold upon me, and like the prince in Tennyson's poem, "I seemed to move amid a world of ghosts." There had been a garden-party at the commander-in-chief's, and we two joined the crowd of homeward-bound folk. As I saw them then it seemed that *they* were the shadows—impalpable fantastic shadows—that divided for Mrs. Wessington's 'rickshaw to pass through. What we said during the course of that weird interview I can not—indeed, I dare not—tell. Heathelegh's comment would have been a short laugh and a remark that I had been "mashing a brain-eye-and-stomach chimera." It was a ghastly and yet in some

indefinable way a marvelously dear experience. Could it be possible, I wondered, that I was in this life to woo a second time the woman I had killed by my own neglect and cruelty?

I met Kitty on the homeward road—a shadow among shadows.

If I were to describe all the incidents of the next fortnight in their order, my story would never come to an end; and your patience would be exhausted. Morning after morning and evening after evening the ghostly 'rickshaw and I used to wander through Simla together. Wherever I went there the four black and white liveries followed me and bore me company to and from my hotel. At the theater I found them amid the crowd of yelling *jhampanies;* outside the club veranda, after a long evening of whist; at the birthday ball, waiting patiently for my reappearance; and in broad daylight when I went calling. Save that it cast no shadow, the 'rickshaw was in every respect as real to look upon as one of wood and iron. More than once, indeed, I have had to check myself from warning some hard-riding friend against cantering over it. More than once I have walked down the Mall deep in conversation with Mrs. Wessington to the unspeakable amazement of the passers-by.

Before I had been out and about a week I learned that the "fit" theory had been discarded in favor of insanity. However, I made no change in my mode of life. I called, rode, and dined out as freely as ever. I had a passion for the society of my kind which I had never felt before; I hungered to be among the realities of life; and at the same time I felt vaguely unhappy when I had been separated too long from my ghostly companion. It would be almost impossible to describe my varying moods from the 15th of May up to to-day.

The presence of the 'rickshaw filled me by turns with horror, blind fear, a dim sort of pleasure, and utter despair. I dared not leave Simla; and I knew that my stay there was killing me. I knew, moreover, that it was my destiny to die slowly and a little every day. My only anxiety was to get

the penance over as quietly as might be. Alternately I hungered for a sight of Kitty and watched her outrageous flirtations with my successor—to speak more accurately, my successors—with amused interest. She was as much out of my life as I was out of hers. By day I wandered with Mrs. Wessington almost content. By night I implored Heaven to let me return to the world as I used to know it.

Above all these varying moods lay the sensation of dull, numbing wonder that the Seen and the Unseen should mingle so strangely on this earth to hound one poor soul to its grave.

. . . . . .

August 27.—Heatherlegh has been indefatigable in his attendance on me; and only yesterday told me that I ought to send in an application for sick leave. An application to escape the company of a phantom! A request that the government would graciously permit me to get rid of five ghosts and an airy 'rickshaw by going to England! Heatherlegh's proposition moved me to almost hysterical laughter. I told him that I should await the end quietly at Simla; and I am sure that the end is not far off. Believe me that I dread its advent more than any word can say; and I torture myself nightly with a thousand speculations as to the manner of my death.

Shall I die in my bed decently and as an English gentleman should die; or, in one last walk on the Mall, will my soul be wrenched from me to take its place for ever and ever by the side of that ghastly phantasm? Shall I return to my old lost allegiance in the next world, or shall I meet Agnes, loathing her and bound to her side through all eternity? Shall we two hover over the scene of our lives till the end of Time? As the day of my death draws nearer, the intense horror that all living flesh feels toward escaped spirits from beyond the grave grows more and more powerful. It is an awful thing to go down quick among the dead with scarcely one half of your life completed. It is a thousand times more awful to wait as I do in your midst, for I know

not what unimaginable terror. Pity me, at least on the score of my "delusion," for I know you will never believe what I have written here. Yet as surely as ever a man was done to death by the Powers of Darkness I am that man.

In justice, too, pity her. For as surely as ever woman was killed by man, I killed Mrs. Wessington. And the last portion of my punishment is even now upon me.

MY OWN TRUE GHOST STORY

> As I came through the Desert thus it was—
> As I came through the Desert.
> —*The City of Dreadful Night*

SOMEWHERE in the other world, where there are books and pictures and plays and shop-windows to look at, and thousands of men who spend their lives in building up all four, lives a gentleman who writes real stories about the real insides of people; and his name is Mr. Walter Besant. But he will insist upon treating his ghosts—he has published half a workshopful of them—with levity. He makes his ghost-seers talk familiarly, and, in some cases, flirt outrageously, with the phantoms. You may treat anything, from a viceroy to a vernacular paper, with levity; but you must behave reverently toward a ghost, and particularly an Indian one.

There are, in this land, ghosts who take the form of fat, cold, pobby corpses, and hide in trees near the roadside till a traveler passes. Then they drop upon his neck and remain. There are also terrible ghosts of women who have died in child-bed. These wander along the pathways at dusk, or hide in the crops near a village, and call seductively. But to answer their call is death in this world and the next. Their feet are turned backward that all sober men may recognize them. There are ghosts of little children who have been thrown into wells. These haunt well-curbs and the fringes

of jungles, and wail under the stars, or catch women by the wrist and beg to be taken up and carried. These and the corpse-ghosts, however, are only vernacular articles and do not attack sahibs. No native ghost has yet been authentically reported to have frightened an Englishman; but many English ghosts have scared the life out of both white and black.

Nearly every other station owns a ghost. There are said to be two at Simla, not counting the woman who blows the bellows at Syree dâk-bungalow on the Old Road; Mussoorie has a house haunted of a very lively thing; a white lady is supposed to do night-watchman round a house in Lahore; Dalhousie says that one of her houses "repeats" on autumn evenings all the incidents of a horrible horse-and-precipice accident; Murree has a merry ghost, and, now that she has been swept by cholera, will have room for a sorrowful one; there are officers' quarters in Mian Mir whose doors open without reason, and whose furniture is guaranteed to creak, not with the heat of June but with the weight of invisibles who come to lounge in the chairs; Peshawer possesses houses that none will willingly rent; and there is something—not fever—wrong with a big bungalow in Allahabad. The older provinces simply bristle with haunted houses and march phantom armies along their main thoroughfares.

Some of the dâk-bungalows on the Grand Trunk Road have handy little cemeteries in their compound—witnesses to the "changes and chances of this mortal life" in the days when men drove from Calcutta to the northwest. These bungalows are objectionable places to put up in. They are generally very old, always dirty, while the *khansamah* is as ancient as the bungalow. He either chatters senilely, or falls into the long trances of age. In both moods he is useless. If you get angry with him, he refers to some sahib dead and buried these thirty years, and says that when he was in that sahib's service not a *khansamah* in the province could touch him. Then he jabbers and mows and trembles and fidgets among the dishes, and you repent of your irritation. In

these dâk-bungalows, ghosts are most likely to be found, and when found, they should be made a note of. Not long ago it was my business to live in dâk-bungalows. I never inhabited the same house for three nights running, and grew to be learned in the breed. I lived in government-built ones with red brick walls and rail ceilings, an inventory of the furniture posted in every room, and an excited snake at the threshold to give welcome. I lived in "converted" ones—old houses officiating as dâk-bungalows—where nothing was in its proper place and there wasn't even a fowl for dinner. I lived in second-hand palaces where the wind blew through open-work marble tracery just as uncomfortably as through a broken pane. I lived in dâk-bungalows where the last entry in the visitors' book was fifteen months old, and where they slashed off the curry-kid's head with a sword. It was my good luck to meet all sorts of men, from sober traveling missionaries and deserters flying from British regiments, to drunken loafers who threw whisky bottles at all who passed; and my still greater good fortune just to escape a maternity case. Seeing that a fair proportion of the tragedy of our lives out here acted itself in dâk-bungalows, I wondered that I had met no ghosts. A ghost that would voluntarily hang about a dâk-bungalow would be mad, of course; but so many men have died mad in dâk-bungalows that there must be a fair percentage of lunatic ghosts. In due time I found my ghost, or ghosts rather, for there were two of them. Up till that hour I had sympathized with Mr. Besant's method of handling them, as shown in "The Strange Case of Mr. Lucraft, and other Stories." I am now in the opposition.

We will call the bungalow Katmal dâk-bungalow. But *that* was the smallest part of the horror. A man with a sensitive hide has no right to sleep in dâk-bungalows. He should marry. Katmal dâk-bungalow was old and rotten and unrepaired. The floor was of worn brick, the walls were filthy, and the windows were nearly black with grime. It stood on a by-path largely used by native sub-deputy assistants of all kinds, from finance to forests; but real sahibs were rare.

The *khansamah*, who was nearly bent double with old age, said so.

When I arrived, there was a fitful, undecided rain on the face of the land, accompanied by a restless wind, and every gust made a noise like the rattling of dry bones in the stiff toddy-palms outside. The *khansamah* completely lost his head on my arrival. He had served a sahib once. Did I know that sahib? He gave me the name of a well-known man who has been buried for more than a quarter of a century, and showed me an ancient daguerreotype of that man in his prehistoric youth. I had seen a steel engraving of him at the head of a double volume of Memoirs a month before, and I felt ancient beyond telling.

The day shut in and the *khansamah* went to get me food. He did not go through the pretense of calling it "*khana*"—man's victuals. He said "*ratub*," and that means, among other things, "grub"—dogs' rations. There was no insult in his choice of the term. He had forgotten the other word, I suppose.

While he was cutting up the dead bodies of animals, I settled myself down, after exploring the dâk-bungalow. There were three rooms, beside my own, which was a corner kennel, each giving into the other through dingy white doors fastened with long iron bars. The bungalow was a very solid one, but the partition walls of the rooms were almost jerry-built in their flimsiness. Every step or bang of a trunk echoed from my room down the other three, and every footfall came back tremulously from the far walls. For this reason I shut the door. There were no lamps—only candles in long glass shades. An oil wick was set in the bath-room.

For bleak, unadulterated misery that dâk-bungalow was the worst of the many that I had ever set foot in. There was no fireplace, and the windows would not open; so a brazier of charcoal would have been useless. The rain and the wind splashed and gurgled and moaned round the house, and the toddy-palms rattled and roared. Half a dozen jackals

went through the compound singing, and a hyena stood afar off and mocked them. A hyena would convince a Sadducee of the resurrection of the dead—the worst sort of dead. Then came the *ratub*—a curious meal, half native and half English in composition—with the old *khansamah* babbling behind my chair about dead and gone English people, and the wind-blown candles playing shadow bo-peep with the bed and the mosquito curtains. It was just the sort of dinner and evening to make a man think of every single one of his past sins, and of all the others that he intended to commit if he lived.

Sleep, for several hundred reasons, was not easy. The lamp in the bath-room threw the most absurd shadows into the room, and the wind was beginning to talk nonsense.

Just when the reasons were drowsy with blood-sucking I heard the regular—"Let-us-take-and-heave-him-over" grunt of doolie-bearers in the compound. First one doolie came in, then a second, and then a third. I heard the doolies dumped on the ground, and the shutter in front of my door shook. "That's some one trying to come in," I said. But no one spoke, and I persuaded myself that it was the gusty wind. The shutter of the room next to mine was attacked, flung back, and the inner door opened. "That's some sub-deputy assistant," I said, "and he has brought his friends with him. Now, they'll talk and spit and smoke for an hour."

But there were no voices and no footsteps. No one was putting his luggage into the next room. The door shut, and I thanked Providence that I was to be left in peace. But I was curious to know where the doolies had gone. I got out of bed and looked into the darkness. There was never a sign of a doolie. Just as I was getting into bed again, I heard, in the next room, the sound that no man in his senses can possibly mistake—the whir of a billiard-ball down the length of the slates when the striker is stringing for break. No other sound is like it. A minute afterward there was another whir, and I got into bed. I was not frightened—indeed I was not. I was very curious to know what had become of the doolies. I jumped into bed for that reason.

Next minute I heard the double click of a cannon and my hair sat up. It is a mistake to say that hair stands up. The skin of the head tightens and you can feel a faint, prickly bristling all over the scalp. That is the hair sitting up.

There was a whir and a click, and both sounds could only have been made by one thing—a billiard-ball. I argued the matter out at great length myself; and the more I argued the less probable it seemed that one bed, one table, and two chairs —all the furniture of the room next to mine—could so exactly duplicate the sounds of a game of billiards. After another cannon, a three-cushion one to judge by the whir, I argued no more. I had found my ghost and would have given worlds to have escaped from that dâk-bungalow. I listened, and with each listen the game grew clearer. There was whir on whir and click on click. Sometimes there was a double click and a whir and another click. Beyond any sort of doubt, people were playing billiards in the next room. And the next room was not big enough to hold a billiard-table.

Between the pauses of the wind I heard the game go forward—stroke after stroke. I tried to believe that I could not hear voices; but that attempt was a failure.

Do you know what fear is? Not ordinary fear of insult, injury or death, but abject, quivering dread of something that you cannot see—fear that dries the inside of the mouth and half of the throat—fear that makes you sweat on the palms of the hands, and gulp in order to keep the uvula at work? This is a fine fear—a great cowardice, and must be felt to be appreciated. The very improbability of billiards in a dâk-bungalow proved the reality of the thing. No man —drunk or sober—could imagine a game at billiards, or invent the spitting crack of a "screw-cannon."

A severe course of dâk-bungalows has this disadvantage —it breeds infinite credulity. If a man said to a confirmed dâk-bungalow-haunter: "There is a corpse in the next room, and there's a mad girl in the next but one, and the woman and man on that camel have just eloped from a place sixty miles away," the hearer would not disbelieve because he

would know that nothing is too wild, grotesque, or horrible to happen in a dâk-bungalow.

This credulity, unfortunately, extends to ghosts. A rational person fresh from his own house would have turned on his side and slept. I did not. So surely as I was given up as a bad carcass by the scores of things in the bed because the bulk of my blood was in my heart, so surely did I hear every stroke of a long game at billiards played in the echoing room behind the iron-barred door. My dominant fear was that the players might want a marker. It was an absurd fear; because creatures who could play in the dark would be above such superfluities. I only know that that was my terror; and it was real.

After a long, long while, the game stopped, and the door banged. I slept because I was dead tired. Otherwise I should have preferred to have kept awake. Not for everything in Asia would I have dropped the door-bar and peered into the dark of the next room.

When the morning came, I considered that I had done well and wisely, and inquired for the means of departure.

"By the way, *khansamah*," I said, "what were those three doolies doing in my compound in the night?"

"There were no doolies," said the *khansamah*.

I went into the next room and the daylight streamed through the open door. I was immensely brave. I would, at that hour, have played black pool with the owner of the big black pool down below.

"Has this place always been a dâk-bungalow?" I asked.

"No," said the *khansamah*. "Ten or twenty years ago, I have forgotten how long, it was a billiard room."

"A how much?"

"A billiard-room for the sahibs who built the railway. I was *khansamah* then in the big house where all the railway sahibs lived, and I used to come across with brandy-*shrab*. These three rooms were all one, and they held a big table on which the sahibs played every evening. But the sahibs are

all dead now, and the railway runs, you say, nearly to Kabul."

"Do you remember anything about the sahibs?"

"It is long ago, but I remember that one sahib, a fat man and always angry, was playing here one night, and he said to me: 'Mangal Khan, brandy-*pani do*,' and I filled the glass, and he bent over the table to strike, and his head fell lower and lower till it hit the table, and his spectacles came off, and when we—the sahibs and I myself—ran to lift him he was dead. I helped to carry him out. Aha, he was a strong sahib! But he is dead, and I, old Mangal Khan, am still living, by your favor."

That was more than enough! I had my ghost—a first-hand, authenticated article. I would write to the Society for Psychical Research—I would paralyze the empire with the news! But I would, first of all, put eighty miles of assessed crop-land between myself and that dâk-bungalow before nightfall. The society might send their regular agent to investigate later on.

I went into my own room and prepared to pack after noting down the facts of the case. As I smoked I heard the game begin again—with a miss in balk this time, for the whir was a short one.

The door was open and I could see into the room. *Click—click!* That was a cannon. I entered the room without fear, for there was sunlight within and a fresh breeze without. The unseen game was going on at a tremendous rate. And well it might, when a restless little rat was running to and fro inside the dingy ceiling-cloth, and a piece of loose window-sash was making fifty breaks off the window-bolt as it shook in the breeze!

Impossible to mistake the sound of billiard-balls! Impossible to mistake the whir of a ball over the slate! But I was to be excused. Even when I shut my enlightened eyes the sound was marvelously like that of a fast game.

Entered angrily the faithful partner of my sorrows, Kadir Baksh.

"This bungalow is very bad and low-caste! No wonder the presence was disturbed and is speckled. Three sets of doolie-bearers came to the bungalow late last night when I was sleeping outside, and said that it was their custom to rest in the rooms set apart for the English people! What honor has the *khansamah?* They tried to enter, but I told them to go. No wonder, if these *Oorias* have been here, that the presence is sorely spotted. It is shame, and the work of a dirty man!"

Kadir Baksh did not say that he had taken from each gang two annas for rent in advance, and then, beyond my ear-shot, had beaten them with the big green umbrella whose use I could never before divine. But Kadir Baksh has no notions of morality.

There was an interview with the *khansamah*, but as he promptly lost his head, wrath gave place to pity, and pity led to a long conversation, in the course of which he put the fat engineer sahib's tragic death in three separate stations—two of them fifty miles away. The third shift was to Calcutta, and there the sahib died while driving a dog-cart.

If I had encouraged him the *khansamah* would have wandered all through Bengal with his corpse.

I did not go away as soon as I intended. I stayed for the night, while the wind and the rat and the sash and the window-bolt played a ding-dong "hundred and fifty up." Then the wind ran out and the billiards stopped, and I felt that I had ruined my one genuine, hall-marked ghost story.

Had I only stopped at the proper time, I could have made *anything* out of it.

That was the bitterest thought of all!

THE STRANGE RIDE OF MORROWBIE JUKES

Alive or dead—there is no other way.—*Native Proverb*

THERE is, as the conjurers say, no deception about this tale. Jukes by accident stumbled upon a village that is well known to exist, though he is the only Englishman who has been there. A somewhat similar institution used to flourish on the outskirts of Calcutta, and there is a story that if you go into the heart of Bikanir, which is in the heart of the Great Indian Desert, you shall come across not a village but a town where the dead who did not die but may not live have established their headquarters. And, since it is perfectly true that in the same desert is a wonderful city where all the rich money-lenders retreat after they have made their fortunes (fortunes so vast that the owners cannot trust even the strong hand of the government to protect them, but take refuge in the waterless sands), and drive sumptuous C-spring barouches, and buy beautiful girls, and decorate their palaces with gold and ivory and Minton tiles and mother-o'-pearl, I do not see why Jukes's tale should not be true. He is a civil engineer, with a head for plans and distances and things of that kind, and he certainly would not take the trouble to invent imaginary traps. He could earn more by doing his legitimate work. He never varies the tale in the telling, and grows very hot and indignant when he thinks of the disrespectful treatment he received. He wrote this quite straightforwardly at first, but he has since touched it up in places and introduced moral reflections, thus:

In the beginning it all arose from a slight attack of fever. My work necessitated my being in camp for some months be-

tween Pakpattan and Mubarakpur—a desolate sandy stretch of country, as every one who has had the misfortune to go there may know. My coolies were neither more nor less exasperating than other gangs, and my work demanded sufficient attention to keep me from moping, had I been inclined to so unmanly a weakness.

On the 23d of December, 1884, I felt a little feverish. There was a full moon at the time, and, in consequence, every dog near my tent was baying it. The brutes assembled in twos and threes and drove me frantic. A few days previously I had shot one loud-mouthed singer and suspended his carcass *in terrorem* about fifty yards from my tent door. But his friends fell upon, fought for, and ultimately devoured the body; and, as it seemed to me, sung their hymns of thanksgiving afterward with renewed energy.

The light-headedness which accompanies fever acts differently on different men. My irritation gave way, after a short time, to a fixed determination to slaughter one huge black and white beast who had been foremost in song and first in flight throughout the evening. Thanks to a shaking hand and a giddy head I had already missed him twice with both barrels of my shotgun, when it struck me that my best plan would be to ride him down in the open and finish him off with a hog-spear. This, of course, was merely the semi-delirious notion of a fever patient; but I remember that it struck me at the time as being eminently practical and feasible.

I therefore ordered my groom to saddle Pornic and bring him round quietly to the rear of my tent. When the pony was ready, I stood at his head prepared to mount and dash out as soon as the dog should again lift up his voice. Pornic, by the way, had not been out of his pickets for a couple of days; the night air was crisp and chilly; and I was armed with a specially long and sharp pair of persuaders with which I had been rousing a sluggish cob that afternoon. You will easily believe, then, that when he was let go he went quickly. In one moment, for the brute bolted as straight as a die, the

tent was left far behind, and we were flying over the smooth sandy soil at racing speed. In another we had passed the wretched dog, and I had almost forgotten why it was that I had taken horse and hog-spear.

The delirium of fever and the excitement of rapid motion through the air must have taken away the remnant of my senses. I have a faint recollection of standing upright in my stirrups, and of brandishing my hog-spear at the great white moon that looked down so calmly on my mad gallop; and of shouting challenges to the camel-thorn bushes as they whizzed past. Once or twice, I believe, I swayed forward on Pornic's neck, and literally hung on by my spurs—as the marks next morning showed.

The wretched beast went forward like a thing possessed, over what seemed to be a limitless expanse of moonlit sand. Next, I remember, the ground rose suddenly in front of us, and as we topped the ascent I saw the waters of the Sutlej shining like a silver bar below. Then Pornic blundered heavily on his nose, and we rolled together down some unseen slope.

I must have lost consciousness, for when I recovered I was lying on my stomach in a heap of soft white sand, and the dawn was beginning to break dimly over the edge of the slope down which I had fallen. As the light grew stronger I saw that I was at the bottom of a horseshoe-shaped crater of sand, opening on one side directly on to the shoals of the Sutlej. My fever had altogether left me, and, with the exception of a slight dizziness in the head, I felt no bad effects from the fall overnight.

Pornic, who was standing a few yards away, was naturally a good deal exhausted, but had not hurt himself in the least. His saddle, a favorite polo one, was much knocked about, and had been twisted under his belly. It took me some time to put him to rights, and in the meantime I had ample opportunities of observing the spot into which I had so foolishly dropped.

At the risk of being considered tedious, I must describe

it at length; inasmuch as an accurate mental picture of its peculiarities will be of material assistance in enabling the reader to understand what follows.

Imagine then, as I have said before, a horseshoe-shaped crater of sand with steeply graded sand walls about thirty-five feet high. (The slope, I fancy, must have been about sixty-five degrees.) This crater inclosed a level piece of ground about fifty yards long by thirty at its broadest part, with a rude well in the center. Round the bottom of the crater, about three feet from the level of the ground proper, ran a series of eighty-three semicircular, ovoid, square, and multilateral holes, all about three feet at the mouth. Each hole on inspection showed that it was carefully shored internally with driftwood and bamboos, and over the mouth a wooden drip-board projected, like the peak of a jockey's cap, for two feet. No sign of life was visible in these tunnels, but a most sickening stench pervaded the entire amphitheater —a stench fouler than any which my wanderings in Indian villages have introduced me to.

Having remounted Pornic, who was as anxious as I to get back to camp, I rode round the base of the horseshoe to find some place whence an exit would be practicable. The inhabitants, whoever they might be, had not thought fit to put in an appearance, so I was left to my own devices. My first attempt to "rush" Pornic up the steep sand-banks showed me that I had fallen into a trap exactly on the same model as that which the ant-lion sets for its prey. At each step the shifting sand poured down from above in tons, and rattled on the drip-boards of the holes like small shot. A couple of ineffectual charges sent us both rolling down to the bottom, half choked with the torrents of sand; and I was constrained to turn my attention to the river bank.

Here everything seemed easy enough. The sand hills ran down to the river edge, it is true, but there were plenty of shoals and shallows across which I could gallop Pornic, and find my way back to *terra firma* by turning sharply to the right or the left. As I led Pornic over the sands I was

startled by the faint pop of a rifle across the river; and at the same moment a bullet dropped with a sharp "*whit*" close to Pornic's head.

There was no mistaking the nature of the missile—a regulation Martini-Henry "picket." About five hundred yards away a country-boat was anchored in midstream; and a jet of smoke drifting away from its bows in the still morning air showed me whence the delicate attention had come. Was ever a respectable gentleman in such an *impasse?* The treacherous sand slope allowed no escape from a spot which I had visited most involuntarily, and a promenade on the river frontage was the signal for a bombardment from some insane native in a boat. I'm afraid that I lost my temper very much indeed.

Another bullet reminded me that I had better save my breath to cool my porridge; and I retreated hastily up the sands and back to the horseshoe, where I saw that the noise of the rifle had drawn sixty-five human beings from the badger-holes which I had up till that point supposed to be untenanted. I found myself in the midst of a crowd of spectators—about forty men, twenty women, and one child who could not have been more than five years old. They were all scantily clothed in that salmon-colored cloth which one associates with Hindoo mendicants, and, at first sight, gave me the impression of a band of loathsome *fakirs.* The filth and repulsiveness of the assembly were beyond all description, and I shuddered to think what their life in the badger-holes must be.

Even in these days, when local self-government has destroyed the greater part of a native's respect for a sahib, I have been accustomed to a certain amount of civility from my inferiors, and on approaching the crowd naturally expected that there would be some recognition of my presence. As a matter of fact there was; but it was by no means what I looked for.

The ragged crew actually laughed at me—such laughter I hope I may never hear again. They cackled, yelled, whis-

tled, and howled as I walked into their midst; some of them literally throwing themselves down on the ground in convulsions of unholy mirth. In a moment I had let go Pornic's head, and, irritated beyond expression at the morning's adventure, commenced cuffing those nearest to me with all the force I could. The wretches dropped under my blows like ninepins, and the laughter gave place to wails for mercy; while those yet untouched clasped me round the knees, imploring me in all sorts of uncouth tongues to spare them.

In the tumult, and just when I was feeling very much ashamed of myself for having thus easily given way to my temper, a thin, high voice murmured in English from behind my shoulder: "Sahib! sahib! do you not know me? Sahib, it is Gunga Dass, the telegraph-master."

I spun round quickly and faced the speaker.

Gunga Dass (I have, of course, no hesitation in mentioning the man's real name) I had known four years before as a Deccanee Brahmin lent by the Punjab Government to one of the Khalsia States. He was in charge of a branch telegraph-office there, and when I had last met him was a jovial, full-stomached, portly government servant with a marvelous capacity for making bad puns in English—a peculiarity which made me remember him long after I had forgotten his services to me in his official capacity. It is seldom that a Hindoo makes English puns.

Now, however, the man was changed beyond all recognition. Caste-mark, stomach, slate-colored continuations, and unctuous speech were all gone. I looked at a withered skeleton, turbanless and almost naked, with long matted hair and deep-set codfish eyes. But for a crescent-shaped scar on the left cheek—the result of an accident for which I was responsible—I should never have known him. But it was indubitably Gunga Dass, and—for this I was thankful—an English-speaking native who might at least tell me the meaning of all that I had gone through that day.

The crowd retreated to some distance as I turned toward the miserable figure, and ordered him to show me some

method of escaping from the crater. He held a freshly plucked crow in his hand, and in reply to my question climbed slowly on a platform of sand which ran in front of the holes, and commenced lighting a fire there in silence. Dried bents, sand-poppies, and driftwood burn quickly; and I derived much consolation from the fact that he lighted them with an ordinary sulphur match. When they were in a bright glow, and the crow was neatly spitted in front thereof, Gunga Dass began without a word of preamble:

"There are only two kinds of men, sar. The alive and the dead. When you are dead you are dead, but when you are alive you live." (Here the crow demanded his attention for an instant as it twirled before the fire in danger of being burned to a cinder.) "If you die at home and do not die when you come to the ghât to be burned you come here."

The nature of the reeking village was made plain now, and all that I had known or read of the grotesque and the horrible paled before the fact just communicated by the ex-Brahmin. Sixteen years ago, when I first landed in Bombay, I had been told by a wandering Armenian of the existence, somewhere in India, of a place to which such Hindoos as had the misfortune to recover from trance or catalepsy were conveyed and kept, and I recollect laughing heartily at what I was then pleased to consider a traveler's tale. Sitting at the bottom of the sand-trap, the memory of Watson's Hotel, with its swinging punkas, white-robed attendants, and the sallow-faced Armenian, rose up in my mind as vividly as a photograph, and I burst into a loud fit of laughter. The contrast was too absurd!

Gunga Dass, as he bent over the unclean bird, watched me curiously. Hindoos seldom laugh, and his surroundings were not such as to move Gunga Dass to any undue excess of hilarity. He removed the crow solemnly from the wooden spit and as solemnly devoured it. Then he continued his story, which I give in his own words:

"In epidemics of the cholera you are carried to be burned almost before you are dead. When you come to the river-

side the cold air, perhaps, makes you alive, and then, if you are only a little alive, mud is put on your nose and mouth and you die conclusively. If you are rather more alive, more mud is put; but if you are too lively they let you go and take you away. I was too lively, and made protestation with anger against the indignities that they endeavored to press upon me. In those days I was Brahmin and proud man. Now I am dead man and eat"—here he eyed the well-knawed breast-bone with the first sign of emotion that I had seen in him since we met—"crows, and other things. They took me from my sheets when they saw that I was too lively and gave me medicines for one week, and I survived successfully. Then they sent me by rail from my place to Okara Station, with a man to take care of me; and at Okara Station we met two other men, and they conducted we three on camels, in the night, from Okara Station to this place, and they propelled me from the top to the bottom, and the other two succeeded, and I have been here ever since two and a half years. Once I was a Brahmin and proud man, and now I eat crows."

"There is no way of getting out?"

"None of what kind at all. When I first came I made experiments frequently and all the others also, but we have always succumbed to the sand which is precipitated upon our heads."

"But surely," I broke in at this point, "the river-front is open, and it is worth while dodging the bullets; while at night—"

I had already matured a rough plan of escape which a natural instinct of selfishness forbade me sharing with Gunga Dass. He, however, divined my unspoken thought almost as soon as it was formed; and, to my intense astonishment, gave vent to a long low chuckle of derision—the laughter, be it understood, of a superior or at least of an equal.

"You will not"—he had dropped the "Sir" completely after his opening sentence—"make any escape that way. But you can try. I have tried. Once only."

The sensation of nameless terror and abject fear which I had in vain attempted to strive against overmastered me completely. My long fast—it was now close upon ten o'clock, and I had eaten nothing since tiffin on the previous day—combined with the violent and unnatural agitation of the ride had exhausted me, and I verily believe that, for a few minutes, I acted as one mad. I hurled myself against the pitiless sand-slope. I ran round the base of the crater, blaspheming and praying by turns. I crawled out among the sedges of the river-front, only to be driven back each time in an agony of nervous dread by the rifle-bullets which cut up the sand round me—for I dared not face the death of a mad dog among that hideous crowd—and finally fell, spent and raving, at the curb of the well. No one had taken the slightest notice of an exhibition which makes me blush hotly even when I think of it now.

Two or three men trod on my panting body as they drew water, but they were evidently used to this sort of thing, and had no time to waste on me. The situation was humiliating. Gunga Dass, indeed, when he had banked the embers of his fire with sand, was at some pains to throw half a cupful of fetid water over my head, an attention for which I could have fallen on my knees and thanked him, but he was laughing all the while in the same mirthless, wheezy key that greeted me on my first attempt to force the shoals. And so, in a semi-comatose condition, I lay till noon. Then, being only a man after all, I felt hungry, and intimated as much to Gunda Dass, whom I had begun to regard as my natural protector. Following the impulse of the outer world when dealing with natives, I put my hand into my pocket and drew out four annas. The absurdity of the gift struck me at once, and I was about to replace the money.

Gunga Dass, however, was of a different opinion. "Give me the money," said he; "all you have, or I will get help, and we will kill you!" All this as if it were the most natural thing in the world!

A Briton's first impulse, I believe, is to guard the con-

tents of his pockets; but a moment's reflection convinced me of the futility of differing with the one man who had it in his power to make me comfortable; and with whose help it was possible that I might eventually escape from the crater. I gave him all the money in my possession, Rs. 9-8-5—nine rupees, eight annas, and five pie—for I always keep small change as *bakshish* when I am in camp. Gunga Dass clutched the coins, and hid them at once in his ragged loin-cloth, his expression changing to something diabolical as he looked round to assure himself that no one had observed us.

"*Now* I will give you something to eat," said he.

What pleasure the possession of my money could have afforded him I am unable to say; but inasmuch as it did give him evident delight I was not sorry that I had parted with it so readily, for I had no doubt that he would have had me killed if I had refused. One does not protest against the vagaries of a den of wild beasts; and my companions were lower than any beasts. While I devoured what Gunga Dass had provided, a coarse *chapatti* and a cupful of the foul well-water, the people showed not the faintest sign of curiosity—that curiosity which is so rampant, as a rule, in an Indian village.

I could even fancy that they despised me. At all events they treated me with the most chilling indifference, and Gunga Dass was nearly as bad. I plied him with questions about the terrible village, and received extremely unsatisfactory answers. So far as I could gather, it had been in existence from time immemorial—whence I concluded that it was at least a century old—and during that time no one had ever been known to escape from it. (I had to control myself here with both hands, lest the blind terror should lay hold of me a second time and drive me raving round the crater.) Gunga Dass took a malicious pleasure in emphasizing this point and in watching me wince. Nothing that I could do would induce him to tell me who the mysterious "They" were.

"It is so ordered," he would reply, "and I do not yet know any one who has disobeyed the orders."

"Only wait till my servants find that I am missing," I retorted, "and I promise you that this place shall be cleared off the face of the earth, and I'll give you a lesson in civility, too, my friend."

"Your servants would be torn in pieces before they came near this place; and, besides, you are dead, my dear friend. It is not your fault, of course, but none the less you are dead *and* buried."

At irregular intervals supplies of food, I was told, were dropped down from the land side into the amphitheater, and the inhabitants fought for them like wild beasts. When a man felt his death coming on he retreated to his lair and died there. The body was sometimes dragged out of the hole and thrown on to the sand, or allowed to rot where it lay.

The phrase "thrown on to the sand" caught my attention, and I asked Gunga Dass whether this sort of thing was not likely to breed a pestilence.

"That," said he, with another of his wheezy chuckles, "you may see for yourself subsequently. You will have much time to make observations."

Whereat, to his great delight, I winced once more and hastily continued the conversation: "And how do you live here from day to day? What do you do?" The question elicited exactly the same answer as before—coupled with the information that "this place is like your European heaven; there is neither marrying nor giving in marriage."

Gunga Dass had been educated at a Mission School, and, as he himself admitted, had he only changed his religion "like a wise man," might have avoided the living grave which was now his portion. But as long as I was with him I fancy he was happy.

Here was a sahib, a representative of the dominant race, helpless as a child and completely at the mercy of his native neighbors. In a deliberate lazy way he set himself to torture me as a schoolboy would devote a rapturous half-hour to watching the agonies of an impaled beetle, or as a ferret

in a blind burrow might glue himself comfortably to the neck of a rabbit. The burden of his conversation was that there was no escape "of no kind whatever," and that I should stay here till I died and was "thrown on to the sand." If it were possible to forejudge the conversation of the damned on the advent of a new soul in their abode, I should say that they would speak as Gunga Dass did to me throughout that long afternoon. I was powerless to protest or answer; all my energies being devoted to a struggle against the inexplicable terror that threatened to overwhelm me again and again. I can compare the feeling to nothing except the struggles of a man against the overpowering nausea of the Channel passage—only my agony was of the spirit and infinitely more terrible.

As the day wore on, the inhabitants began to appear in full strength to catch the rays of the afternoon sun, which were now sloping in at the mouth of the crater. They assembled in little knots, and talked among themselves without even throwing a glance in my direction. About four o'clock, as far as I could judge, Gunga Dass rose and dived into his lair for a moment, emerging with a live crow in his hands. The wretched bird was in a most draggled and deplorable condition, but seemed to be in no way afraid of its master. Advancing cautiously to the river-front, Gunga Dass stepped from tussock to tussock until he had reached a smooth patch of sand directly in the line of the boat's fire. The occupants of the boat took no notice. Here he stopped, and, with a couple of dexterous turns of the wrist, pegged the bird on its back with outstretched wings. As was only natural, the crow began to shriek at once and beat the air with its claws. In a few seconds the clamor had attracted the attention of a bevy of wild crows on a shoal a few hundred yards away, where they were discussing something that looked like a corpse. Half a dozen crows flew over at once to see what was going on, and also, as it proved, to attack the pinioned bird. Gunga Dass, who had lain down on a tussock, motioned to me to be quiet, though I

fancy this was a needless precaution. In a moment, and before I could see how it happened, a wild crow, who had grappled with the shrieking and helpless bird, was entangled in the latter's claws, swiftly disengaged by Gunga Dass, and pegged down beside its companion in adversity. Curiosity, it seemed, overpowered the rest of the flock, and almost before Gunga Dass and I had time to withdraw to the tussock, two more captives were struggling in the upturned claws of the decoys. So the chase—if I can give it so dignified a name—continued until Gunga Dass had captured seven crows. Five of them he throttled at once, reserving two for further operations another day. I was a good deal impressed by this, to me, novel method of securing food, and complimented Gunga Dass on his skill.

"It is nothing to do," said he. "To morrow you must do it for me. You are stronger than I am."

This calm assumption of superiority upset me not a little, and I answered peremptorily: "Indeed, you old ruffian! What do you think I have given you money for?"

"Very well," was the unmoved reply. "Perhaps not to-morrow, nor the day after, nor subsequently; but in the end, and for many years, you will catch crows and eat crows, and you will thank your European God that you have crows to catch and eat."

I could have cheerfully strangled him for this; but judged it best under the circumstances to smother my resentment. An hour later I was eating one of the crows; and, as Gunga Dass had said, thanking my God that I had a crow to eat. Never as long as I live shall I forget that evening meal. The whole population were squatting on the hard sand platform opposite their dens, huddled over tiny fires of refuse and dried rushes. Death, having once laid his hand upon these men and forborne to strike, seemed to stand aloof from them now; for the most of our company were old men, bent and worn and twisted with years, and women aged to all appearance as the fates themselves. They sat together in knots and talked—God only knows what they found to discuss—in

low equable tones, curiously in contrast to the strident babble with which natives are accustomed to make day hideous. Now and then an access of that sudden fury which had possessed me in the morning would lay hold on a man or woman; and with yells and imprecations the sufferer would attack the steep slope until, baffled and bleeding, he fell back on the platform incapable of moving a limb. The others would never even raise their eyes when this happened, as men too well aware of the futility of their fellows' attempts and wearied with their useless repetition. I saw four such outbursts in the course of that evening.

Gunga Dass took an eminently business-like view of my situation, and while we were dining—I can afford to laugh at the recollection now, but it was painful enough at the time—propounded the terms on which he would consent to "do" for me. My nine rupees eight annas, he argued, at the rate of three annas a day, would provide me with food for fifty-one days, or about seven weeks; that is to say, he would be willing to cater for me for that length of time. At the end of it I was to look after myself. For a further consideration—*videlicet* my boots—he would be willing to allow me to occupy the den next to his own, and would supply me with as much dried grass for bedding as he could spare.

"Very well, Gunga Dass," I replied; "to the first terms I cheerfully agree, but, as there is nothing on earth to prevent my killing you as you sit here and taking everything that you have" (I thought of the two invaluable crows at the time), "I flatly refuse to give you my boots and shall take whichever den I please."

The stroke was a bold one, and I was glad when I saw that it had succeeded. Gunga Dass changed his tone immediately, and disavowed all intention of asking for my boots. At the time it did not strike me as at all strange that I, a civil engineer, a man of thirteen years' standing in the service, and, I trust, an average Englishman, should thus calmly threaten murder and violence against the man who had, for a consideration, it is true, taken me under his wing.

I had left the world, it seemed, for centuries. I was as certain then as I am now of my own existence, that in the accursed settlement there was no law save that of the strongest; that the living dead men had thrown behind them every canon of the world which had cast them out; and that I had to depend for my own life on my strength and vigilance alone. The crew of the ill-fated "Mignonette" are the only men who would understand my frame of mind. "At present," I argued to myself, "I am strong and a match for six of these wretches. It is imperatively necessary that I should, for my own sake, keep both health and strength until the hour of my release comes—if it ever does."

Fortified with these resolutions, I eat and drank as much as I could, and made Gunga Dass understand that I intended to be his master, and that the least sign of insubordination on his part would be visited with the only punishment I had it in my power to inflict—sudden and violent death. Shortly after this I went to bed. That is to say, Gunga Dass gave me a double armful of dried bents which I thrust down the mouth of the lair to the right of his, and followed myself, feet foremost; the hole running about nine feet into the sand with a slight downward inclination, and being neatly shored with timbers. From my den, which faced the river-front, I was able to watch the waters of the Sutlej flowing past under the light of a young moon and compose myself to sleep as best I might.

The horrors of that night I shall never forget. My den was nearly as narrow as a coffin, and the sides had been worn smooth and greasy by the contact of innumerable naked bodies, added to which it smelled abominably. Sleep was altogether out of question to one in my excited frame of mind. As the night wore on, it seemed that the entire amphitheater was filled with legions of unclean devils that, trooping up from the shoals below, mocked the unfortunates in their lairs.

Personally, I am not of an imaginative temperament—very few engineers are—but on that occasion I was as com-

pletely prostrated with nervous terror as any woman. After half an hour or so, however, I was able once more to calmly review my chances of escape. Any exit by the steep sand walls was, of course, impracticable. I had been thoroughly convinced of this some time before. It was possible, just possible, that I might, in the uncertain moonlight, safely run the gantlet of the rifle shots. The place was so full of terror for me that I was prepared to undergo any risk in leaving it. Imagine my delight, then, when after creeping stealthily to the river-front I found that the infernal boat was not there. My freedom lay before me in the next few steps!

By walking out to the first shallow pool that lay at the foot of the projecting left horn of the horseshoe, I could wade across, turn the flank of the crater, and make my way inland. Without a moment's hesitation I marched briskly past the tussocks where Gunga Dass had snared the crows, and out in the direction of the smooth white sand beyond. My first step from the tufts of dried grass showed me how utterly futile was any hope of escape; for, as I put my foot down, I felt an indescribable drawing, sucking motion of the sand below. Another moment and my leg was swallowed up nearly to the knee. In the moonlight the whole surface of the sand seemed to be shaken with devilish delight at my disappointment. I struggled clear, sweating with terror and exertion, back to the tussocks behind me and fell on my face.

My only means of escape from the semicircle was protected with a quicksand!

How long I lay I have not the faintest idea; but I was roused at last by the malevolent chuckle of Gunga Dass at my ear. "I would advise you, Protector of the Poor" (the ruffian was speaking English) "to return to your house. It is unhealthy to lie down here. Moreover, when the boat returns, you will most certainly be rifled at." He stood over me in the dim light of the dawn, chuckling and laughing to himself. Suppressing my first impulse to catch the man by the neck and throw him on to the quicksand, I rose sullenly and followed him to the platform below the burrows.

Suddenly, and futilely as I thought while I spoke, I asked: "Gunga Dass, what is the good of the boat if I can't get out *anyhow?*" I recollect that even in my deepest trouble I had been speculating vaguely on the waste of ammunition in guarding an already well protected foreshore.

Gunga Dass laughed again and made answer: "They have the boat only in daytime. It is for the reason that *there is a way.* I hope we shall have the pleasure of your company for much longer time. It is a pleasant spot when you have been here some years and eaten roast crow long enough."

I staggered, numbed and helpless, toward the fetid burrow allotted to me, and fell asleep. An hour or so later I was awakened by a piercing scream—the shrill, high-pitched scream of a horse in pain. Those who have once heard that will never forget the sound. I found some little difficulty in scrambling out of the burrow. When I was in the open, I saw Pornic, my poor old Pornic, lying dead on the sandy soil. How they had killed him I cannot guess. Gunga Dass explained that horse was better than crow, and "greatest good of greatest number is political maxim. We are now Republic, Mister Jukes, and you are entitled to a fair share of the beast. If you like, we will pass a vote of thanks. Shall I propose?"

Yes, we were a Republic indeed! A republic of wild beasts penned at the bottom of a pit, to eat and fight and sleep till we died. I attempted no protest of any kind, but sat down and stared at the hideous sight in front of me. In less time almost than it takes me to write this, Pornic's body was divided, in some unclean way or other; the men and women had dragged the fragments on to the platform and were preparing their morning meal. Gunga Dass cooked mine. The almost irresistible impulse to fly at the sand walls until I was wearied laid hold of me afresh, and I had to struggle against it with all my might. Gunga Dass was offensively jocular till I told him that if he addressed another remark of any kind whatever to me I should strangle him where he

sat. This silenced him till silence became insupportable, and I bade him say something.

"You will live here till you die like the other Feringhi," he said, coolly, watching me over the fragment of gristle that he was gnawing.

"What other sahib, you swine? Speak at once, and don't stop to tell me a lie."

"He is over there," answered Gunga Dass, pointing to a burrow-mouth about four doors to the left of my own. "You can see for yourself. He died in the burrow as you will die, and I will die, and as all these men and women and the one child will also die."

"For pity's sake tell me all you know about him. Who was he? When did he come, and when did he die?"

This appeal was a weak step on my part. Gunga Dass only leered and replied: "I will not—unless you give me something first."

Then I recollected where I was, and struck the man between the eyes, partially stunning him. He stepped down from the platform at once, and, cringing and fawning and weeping and attempting to embrace my feet, led me round to the burrow which he had indicated.

"I know nothing whatever about the gentleman. Your God be my witness that I do not. He was as anxious to escape as you were, and he was shot from the boat, though we all did all things to prevent him from attempting. He was shot here." Gunga Dass laid his hand on his lean stomach and bowed to the earth.

"Well, and what then? Go on!"

"And then—and then, your honor, we carried him in to his house and gave him water, and put wet cloths on the wound, and he laid down in his house and gave up the ghost."

"In how long? In how long?"

"About half an hour after he received his wound. I call Vishnu to witness," yelled the wretched man, "that I did everything for him. Everything which was possible, that I did!"

He threw himself down on the ground and clasped my ankles. But I had my doubts about Gunga Dass's benevolence, and kicked him off as he lay protesting.

"I believe you robbed him of everything he had. But I can find out in a minute or two. How long was the sahib here?"

"Nearly a year and a half. I think he must have gone mad. But hear me swear, Protector of the Poor! Won't your honor hear me swear that I never touched an article that belonged to him? What is your worship going to do?"

I had taken Gunga Dass by the waist and had hauled him on to the platform opposite the deserted burrow. As I did so I thought of my wretched fellow-prisoner's unspeakable misery among all these horrors for eighteen months, and the final agony of dying like a rat in a hole, with a bullet-wound in the stomach. Gunga Dass fancied I was going to kill him and howled pitifully. The rest of the population, in the plethora that follows a full flesh meal, watched us without stirring.

"Go inside, Gunga Dass," said I, "and fetch it out."

I was feeling sick and faint with horror now. Gunga Dass nearly rolled off the platform and howled aloud.

"But I am Brahmin, sahib—a high-caste Brahmin. By your soul, by your father's soul, do not make me do this thing!"

"Brahmin or no Brahmin, by my soul and my father's soul, in you go!" I said, and, seizing him by the shoulders, I crammed his head into the mouth of the burrow, kicked the rest of him in, and, sitting down, covered my face with my hands.

At the end of a few minutes I heard a rustle and a creak; then Gunga Dass in a sobbing, choking whisper speaking to himself; then a soft thud—and I uncovered my eyes.

The dry sand had turned the corpse intrusted to its keeping into a yellow-brown mummy. I told Gunga Dass to stand off while I examined it. The body—clad in an olive-

green hunting-suit much stained and worn, with leather pads on the shoulders—was that of a man between thirty and forty, above middle height, with light, sandy hair, long mustache, and a rough unkempt beard. The left canine of the upper jaw was missing, and a portion of the lobe of the right ear was gone. On the second finger of the left hand was a ring—a shield-shaped blood-stone set in gold, with a monogram that might have been either "B. K." or "B. L." On the third finger of the right hand was a silver ring in the shape of a coiled cobra, much worn and tarnished. Gunga Dass deposited a handful of trifles he had picked out of the burrow at my feet, and, covering the face of the body with my handkerchief, I turned to examine these. I give the full list in the hope that it may lead to the identification of the unfortunate man:

1. Bowl of a brier-wood pipe, serrated at the edge; much worn and blackened; bound with string at the screw.

2. Two patent-lever keys; wards of both broken.

3. Tortoise-shell-handled penknife, silver or nickel, name-plate, marked with monogram "B. K."

4. Envelope, postmark undecipherable, bearing a Victorian stamp, addressed to "Miss Mon—" (rest illegible)—"ham"—"nt."

5. Imitation crocodile-skin note-book with pencil. First forty-five pages blank; four and a half illegible; fifteen others filled with private memoranda relating chiefly to three persons—a Mrs. L. Singleton, abbreviated several times to "Lot Single," "Mrs. S. May," and "Garmison," referred to in places as "Jerry" or "Jack."

6. Handle of small-sized hunting knife. Blade snapped short. Buck's horn, diamond-cut, with swivel and ring on the butt; fragment of cotton cord attached.

It must not be supposed that I inventoried all these things on the spot as fully as I have here written them down. The note-book first attracted my attention, and I put it in my pocket with a view to studying it later on. The rest of the articles I conveyed to my burrow for safety's sake, and there,

being a methodical man, I inventoried them. I then returned to the corpse and ordered Gunga Dass to help me to carry it out to the river-front. While we were engaged in this, the exploded shell of an old brown cartridge dropped out of one of the pockets and rolled at my feet. Gunga Dass had not seen it; and I fell to thinking that a man does not carry exploded cartridge-cases, especially "browns," which will not bear loading twice, about with him when shooting. In other words, the cartridge-case had been fired inside the crater. Consequently there must be a gun somewhere. I was on the verge of asking Gunga Dass, but checked myself, knowing that he would lie. We laid the body down on the edge of the quicksand by the tussocks. It was my intention to push it out and let it be swallowed up—the only possible mode of burial that I could think of. I ordered Gunga Dass to go away.

Then I gingerly put the corpse out on the quicksand. In doing so, it was lying face downward, I tore the frail and rotten khaki shooting-coat open, disclosing a hideous cavity in the back. I have already told you that the dry sand had, as it were, mummified the body. A moment's glance showed that the gaping hole had been caused by a gun-shot wound; the gun must have been fired with the muzzle almost touching the back. The shooting-coat, being intact, had been drawn over the body after death, which must have been instantaneous. The secret of the poor wretch's death was plain to me in a flash. Some one of the crater, presumably Gunga Dass, must have shot him with his own gun—the gun that fitted the brown cartridges. He had never attempted to escape in the face of the rifle-fire from the boat.

I pushed the corpse out hastily, and saw it sink from sight literally in a few seconds. I shuddered as I watched. In a dazed, half-conscious way I turned to peruse the notebook. A stained and discolored slip of paper had been inserted between the binding and the back, and dropped out as I opened the pages. This is what it contained:

"Four out from crow-clump; three left; nine out; two right; three back; two left; fourteen out; two left; seven out; one left; nine back; two right; six back; four right; seven back."

The paper had been burned and charred at the edges. What it meant I could not understand. I sat down on the dried bents, turning it over and over between my fingers, until I was aware of Gunga Dass standing immediately behind me with glowing eyes and outstretched hands.

"Have you got it?" he panted. "Will you not let me look at it also? I swear that I will return it."

"Got what? Return what?" I asked.

"That which you have in your hands. It will help us both." He stretched out his long, bird-like talons, trembling with eagerness.

"I could never find it," he continued. "He had secreted it about his person. Therefore I shot him, but nevertheless I was unable to obtain it."

Gunga Dass had quite forgotten his little fiction about the rifle-bullet. I received the information perfectly calmly. Morality is blunted by consorting with the dead who are alive.

"What on earth are you raving about? What is it you want me to give you?"

"The piece of paper in the note-book. It will help us both. Oh, you fool! You fool! Can you not see what it will do for us? We shall escape!"

His voice rose almost to a scream, and he danced with excitement before me. I own I was moved at the chance of getting away.

"Don't skip! Explain yourself. Do you mean to say that this slip of paper will help us? What does it mean?"

"Read it aloud! Read it aloud! I beg and I pray to you to read it aloud."

I did so. Gunga Dass listened delightedly, and drew an irregular line in the sand with his fingers.

"See now! It was the length of his gun-barrels without the stock. I have those barrels. Four gun barrels out from the place where I caught crows. Straight out; do you follow me? Then three left— Ah! how well I remember when that man worked it out night after night. Then nine out, and so on. Out is always straight before you across the quicksand. He told me so before I killed him."

"But if you knew all this why didn't you get out before?"

"I did *not* know it. He told me that he was working it out a year and a half ago, and how he was working it out night after night when the boat had gone away, and he could get out near the quicksand safely. Then he said that we would get away together. But I was afraid that he would leave me behind one night when he had worked it all out, and so I shot him. Besides, it is not advisable that the men who once get in here should escape. Only I, and *I* am a Brahmin."

The prospect of escape had brought Gunga Dass's caste back to him. He stood up, walked about, and gesticulated violently. Eventually I managed to make him talk soberly, and he told me how this Englishman had spent six months night after night in exploring, inch by inch, the passage across the quicksand; how he had declared it to be simplicity itself up to within about twenty yards of the river-bank after turning the flank of the left horn of the horseshoe. This much he had evidently not completed when Gunga Dass shot him with his own gun.

In my frenzy of delight at the possibilities of escape I recollect shaking hands effusively with Gunga Dass, after we had decided that we were to make an attempt to get away that very night. It was weary work waiting throughout the afternoon.

About ten o'clock, as far as I could judge, when the moon had just risen above the lip of the crater, Gunga Dass made a move for his burrow to bring out the gun-barrels whereby to measure our path. All the other wretched inhabitants had retired to their lairs long ago. The guardian boat drifted

down-stream some hours before, and we were utterly alone by the crow-clump. Gunga Dass, while carrying the gun-barrels, let slip the piece of paper which was to be our guide. I stooped down hastily to recover it, and, as I did so, I was aware that the diabolical Brahmin was aiming a violent blow at the back of my head with the gun-barrels. It was too late to turn round. I must have received the blow somewhere on the nape of my neck. A hundred thousand fiery stars danced before my eyes, and I fell forward senseless at the edge of the quicksand.

When I recovered consciousness, the moon was going down, and I was sensible of intolerable pain in the back of my head. Gunga Dass had disappeared and my mouth was full of blood. I lay down again and prayed that I might die without more ado. Then the unreasoning fury which I have before mentioned laid hold upon me, and I staggered inland toward the walls of the crater. It seemed that some one was calling to me in a whisper: "Sahib! Sahib! Sahib!" exactly as my bearer used to call me in the mornings. I fancied that I was delirious until a handful of sand fell at my feet. Then I looked up and saw a head peering down into the amphitheater—the head of Dunnoo, my dog boy, who attended to my collies. As soon as he had attracted my attention, he held up his hand and showed a rope. I motioned, staggering to and fro the while, that he should throw it down. It was a couple of leather punka ropes knotted together, with a loop at one end. I slipped the loop over my head and under my arms; heard Dunnoo urge something forward; was conscious that I was being dragged, face downward, up the steep sand slope, and the next instant found myself choked and half fainting on the sand hills overlooking the crater. Dunnoo, with his face ashy gray in the moonlight, implored me not to stay but to get back to my tent at once.

It seems that he had tracked Pornic's footprints fourteen miles across the sands to the crater; had returned and told my servants, who flatly refused to meddle with any one,

white or black, once fallen into the hideous Village of the Dead; whereupon Dunnoo had taken one of my ponies and a couple of punka ropes, returned to the crater, and hauled me out as I have described.

To cut a long story short, Dunnoo is now my personal servant on a gold mohur a month—a sum which I still think far too little for the services he has rendered. Nothing on earth will induce me to go near that devilish spot again, or to reveal its whereabout more clearly than I have done. Of Gunga Dass I have never found a trace, nor do I wish to do. My sole motive in giving this to be published is the hope that some one may possibly identify, from the details and the inventory which I have given above, the corpse of the man in the olive-green hunting-suit.

THE MAN WHO WOULD BE KING

"Brother to a prince and fellow to a beggar if he be found worthy"

THE law, as quoted, lays down a fair conduct of life, and one not easy to follow. I have been fellow to a beggar again and again under circumstances which prevented either of us finding out whether the other was worthy. I have still to be brother to a prince, though I once came near to kinship with what might have been a veritable king and was promised the reversion of a kingdom—army, law-courts, revenue and policy all complete. But to-day I greatly fear that my king is dead, and if I want a crown I must go and hunt it for myself.

The beginning of everything was in a railway train upon the road to Mhow from Ajmir. There had been a deficit in the budget, which necessitated traveling, not second-class, which is only half as dear as first-class, but by intermediate, which is very awful indeed. There are no cushions in the intermediate class, and the population are either intermediate, which is Eurasian, or native, which for a long night

journey is nasty, or loafer, which is amusing though intoxicated. Intermediates do not patronize refreshment-rooms. They carry their food in bundles and pots, and buy sweets from the native sweetmeat-sellers, and drink the roadside water. That is why in the hot weather intermediates are taken out of the carriages dead, and in all weathers are most properly looked down upon.

My particular intermediate happened to be empty till I reached Nasirabad, when a huge gentleman in shirt-sleeves entered, and, following the custom of intermediates, passed the time of day. He was a wanderer and a vagabond like myself, but with an educated taste for whisky. He told tales of things he had seen and done, of out-of-the-way corners of the empire into which he had penetrated, and of adventures in which he risked his life for a few days' food. "If India was filled with men like you and me, not knowing more than the crows where they'd get their next day's rations, it isn't seventy millions of revenue the land would be paying—it's seven hundred millions," said he; and as I looked at his mouth and chin I was disposed to agree with him. We talked politics—the politics of loaferdom that sees things from the underside where the lath and plaster is not smoothed off—and we talked postal arrangements because my friend wanted to send a telegram back from the next station to Ajmir, which is the turning-off place from the Bombay to the Mhow line as you travel westward. My friend had no money beyond eight annas, which he wanted for dinner, and I had no money at all, owing to the hitch in the budget before mentioned. Further, I was going into a wilderness where, though I should resume touch with the treasury, there were no telegraph-offices. I was, therefore, unable to help him in any way.

"We might threaten a station-master, and make him send a wire on tick," said my friend, "but that'd mean inquiries for you and for me, and I've got my hands full these days. Did you say you are traveling back along this line within any days?"

"Within ten," I said.

"Can't you make it eight?" said he. "Mine is rather urgent business."

"I can send your telegram within ten days if that will serve you," I said.

"I couldn't trust the wire to fetch him now I think of it. It's this way. He leaves Delhi on the 23d for Bombay. That means he'll be running through Ajmir about the night of the 23d."

"But I'm going into the Indian Desert," I explained.

"Well *and* good," said he. "You'll be changing at Marwar Junction to get into Jodhpore territory—you must do that—and he'll be coming through Marwar Junction in the early morning of the 24th by the Bombay Mail. Can you be at Marwar Junction on that time? 'Twon't be inconveniencing you, because I know that there's precious few pickings to be got out of these Central India States—even though you pretend to be correspondent of the 'Backwoodsman.'"

"Have you ever tried that trick?" I asked.

"Again and again, but the residents find you out, and then you get escorted to the border before you've time to get your knife into them. But about my friend here. I *must* give him a word o' mouth to tell him what's come to me or else he won't know where to go. I would take it more than kind of you if you were to come out of Central India in time to catch him at Marwar Junction, and say to him: 'He has gone South for the week.' He'll know what that means. He's a big man with a red beard, and a great swell he is. You'll find him sleeping like a gentleman with all his luggage round him in a second-class compartment. But don't you be afraid. Slip down the window, and say: 'He has gone South for the week,' and he'll tumble. It's only cutting your time of stay in those parts by two days. I ask you as a stranger—going to the West," he said with emphasis.

"Where have *you* come from?" said I.

"From the East," said he, "and I am hoping that you

will give him the message on the square—for the sake of my mother as well as your own."

Englishmen are not usually softened by appeals to the memory of their mothers, but for certain reasons, which will be fully apparent, I saw fit to agree.

"It's more than a little matter," said he, "and that's why I ask you to do it—and now I know that I can depend on you doing it. A second-class carriage at Marwar Junction, and a red-haired man asleep in it. You'll be sure to remember. I get out at the next station, and I must hold on there till he comes or sends me what I want."

"I'll give the message if I catch him," I said, "and for the sake of your mother as well as mine I'll give you a word of advice. Don't try to run the Central India States just now as the correspondent of the 'Backwoodsman.' There's a real one knocking about here, and it might lead to trouble."

"Thank you," said he, simply, "and when will the swine be gone? I can't starve because he's ruining my work. I wanted to get hold of the Degumber Rajah down here about his father's widow, and give him a jump."

"What did he do to his father's widow, then?"

"Filled her up with red pepper and slippered her to death as she hung from a beam. I found that out myself and I'm the only man that would dare going into the state to get hush-money for it. They'll try to poison me, same as they did in Chortumna when I went on the loot there. But you'll give the man at Marwar Junction my message?"

He got out at a little roadside station, and I reflected. I had heard, more than once, of men personating correspondents of newspapers and bleeding small native states with threats of exposure, but I had never met any of the caste before. They lead a hard life, and generally die with great suddenness. The native states have a wholesome horror of English newspapers, which may throw light on their peculiar methods of government, and do their best to choke correspondents with champagne, or drive them out of their mind with four-in-hand barouches. They do not understand that

nobody cares a straw for the internal administration of native states so long as oppression and crime are kept within decent limits, and the ruler is not drugged, drunk, or diseased from one end of the year to the other. Native states were created by Providence in order to supply picturesque scenery, tigers, and tall writing. They are the dark places of the earth, full of unimaginable cruelty, touching the railway and telegraph on one side, and, on the other, the days of Haroun-al-Raschid.

When I left the train I did business with divers kings, and in eight days passed through many changes of life. Sometimes I wore dress-clothes and consorted with princes and politicals, drinking from crystal and eating from silver. Sometimes I lay out upon the ground and devoured what I could get, from a plate made of a flapjack, and drank the running water, and slept under the same rug as my servant. It was all in the day's work.

Then I headed for the Great Indian Desert upon the proper date, as I had promised, and the night mail set me down at Marwar Junction, where a funny little happy-go-lucky, native-managed railway runs to Jodhpore. The Bombay mail from Delhi makes a short halt at Marwar. She arrived as I got in, and I had just time to hurry to her platform and go down the carriages. There was only one second-class on the train. I slipped the window and looked down upon a flaming red beard, half covered by a railway rug. That was my man, fast asleep, and I dug him gently in the ribs. He woke with a grunt and I saw his face in the light of the lamps. It was a great and shining face.

"Tickets again?" said he.

"No," said I. "I am to tell you that he is gone South for the week. He is gone South for the week!"

The train had begun to move out. The red man rubbed his eyes. "He has gone South for the week," he repeated. "Now that's just like his impudence. Did he say that I was to give you anything? 'Cause I won't."

"He didn't," I said, and dropped away, and watched the red lights die out in the dark. It was horribly cold, because

the wind was blowing off the sands. I climbed into my own train—not an intermediate carriage this time—and went to sleep.

If the man with the beard had given me a rupee I should have kept it as a memento of a rather curious affair. But the consciousness of having done my duty was my only reward.

Later on I reflected that two gentlemen like my friends could not do any good if they foregathered and personated correspondents of newspapers, and might, if they "stuck up" one of the little rat-trap states of Central India or Southern Rajputana, get themselves into serious difficulties. I therefore took some trouble to describe them as accurately as I could remember to people who would be interested in deporting them: and succeeded, so I was later informed, in having them headed back from the Degumber borders.

Then I became respectable, and returned to an office where there were no kings and no incidents except the daily manufacture of a newspaper. A newspaper office seems to attract every conceivable sort of person, to the prejudice of discipline. Kenana Mission ladies arrive, and beg that the editor will instantly abandon all his duties to describe a Christian prize-giving in a back slum of a perfectly inaccessible village; colonels who have been overpassed for commands sit down and sketch the outline of a series of ten, twelve, or twenty-four leading articles on Seniority *versus* Selection; missionaries wish to know why they have not been permitted to escape from their regular vehicles of abuse and swear at a brother missionary under special patronage of the editorial We; stranded theatrical companies troop up to explain that they cannot pay for their advertisements, but on their return from New Zealand or Tahiti will do so with interest; inventors of patent punka-pulling machines, carriage couplings and unbreakable swords and axle-trees called with specifications in their pockets and hours at their disposal; tea companies enter and elaborate their prospectuses with the office pens; secretaries of ball-committees clamor to have the glories of their last dance more fully expounded; strange ladies rustle

in and say: "I want a hundred lady's cards printed *at once*, please," which is manifestly part of an editor's duty; and every dissolute ruffian that ever tramped the Grand Trunk Road makes it his business to ask for employment as a proof-reader. And, all the time, the telephone bell is ringing madly, and kings are being killed on the Continent, and empires are saying, "You're another," and Mr. Gladstone is calling down brimstone upon the British dominions, and the little black copy-boys are whining "*kaapi-chay-ha-yeh*" (copy wanted) like tired bees, and most of the paper is as blank as Modred's shield.

But that is the amusing part of the year. There are other six months wherein none ever come to call, and the thermometer walks inch by inch up to the top of the glass, and the office is darkened to just above reading-light, and the press machines are red-hot of touch, and nobody writes anything but accounts of amusements in the Hill stations or obituary notices. Then the telephone becomes a tinkling terror, because it tells you of the sudden deaths of men and women that you knew intimately, and the prickly heat covers you as with a garment, and you sit down and write: "A slight increase of sickness is reported from the Khuda Janta Khan District. The outbreak is purely sporadic in its nature, and, thanks to the energetic efforts of the district authorities, is now almost at an end. It is, however, with deep regret we record the death," etc.

Then the sickness really breaks out, and the less recording and reporting the better for the peace of the subscribers. But the empires and the kings continue to divert themselves as selfishly as before, and the foreman thinks that a daily paper really ought to come out once in twenty-four hours, and all the people at the Hill stations in the middle of their amusements say: "Good gracious! Why can't the paper be sparkling? I'm sure there's plenty going on up here."

That is the dark half of the moon, and, as the advertisements say, "must be experienced to be appreciated."

It was in that season, and a remarkably evil season, that

the paper began running the last issue of the week on Saturday night, which is to say Sunday morning, after the custom of a London paper. This was a great convenience, for immediately after the paper was put to bed, the dawn would lower the thermometer from ninety-six degrees to almost eighty-four degrees for half an hour, and in that chill—you have no idea how cold is eighty-four degrees on the grass until you begin to pray for it—a very tired man could set off to sleep ere the heat roused him.

One Saturday night it was my pleasant duty to put the paper to bed alone. A king or courtier or a courtesan or a community was going to die or get a new constitution, or do something that was important on the other side of the world, and the paper was to be held open till the latest possible minute in order to catch the telegram. It was a pitchy black night, as stifling as a June night can be, and the *loo*, the red-hot wind from the westward, was booming among the tinder-dry trees and pretending that the rain was on its heels. Now and again a spot of almost boiling water would fall on the dust with the flog of a frog, but all our weary world knew that was only pretense. It was a shade cooler in the press-room than the office, so I sat there, while the type ticked and clicked, and the night-jars hooted at the windows, and the all but naked compositors wiped the sweat from their foreheads and called for water. The thing that was keeping us back, whatever it was, would not come off, though the *loo* dropped and the last type was set, and the whole round earth stood still in the choking heat, with its finger on its lips, to wait the event. I drowsed, and wondered whether the telegraph was a blessing, and whether this dying man, or struggling people, was aware of the inconvenience the delay was causing. There was no special reason beyond the heat and worry to make tension, but, as the clock-hands crept up to three o'clock and the machines spun their fly-wheels two and three times to see that all was in order, before I said the word that would set them off, I could have shrieked aloud.

Then the roar and rattle of the wheels shivered the quiet into little bits. I rose to go away, but two men in white clothes stood in front of me. The first one said: "It's him!" The second said: "So it is!" And they both laughed almost as loudly as the machinery roared, and mopped their foreheads. "We see there was a light burning across the road and we were sleeping in that ditch there for coolness, and I said to my friend here, the office is open. Let's come along and speak to him as turned us back from the Degumber state," said the smaller of the two. He was the man I had met in the Mhow train, and his fellow was the red-bearded man of Marwar Junction. There was no mistaking the eyebrows of the one or the beard of the other.

I was not pleased, because I wished to go to sleep, not to squabble with loafers. "What do you want?" I asked.

"Half an hour's talk with you cool and comfortable, in the office," said the red-bearded man. "We'd *like* some drink—the contrack doesn't begin yet, Peachey, so you needn't look—but what we really want is advice. We don't want money. We ask you as a favor, because you did us a favor, because you did us a bad turn about Degumber."

I led from the press-room to the stifling office with the maps on the walls, and the red-haired man rubbed his hands. "That's something like," said he. "This was the proper shop to come to. Now, sir, let me introduce to you Brother Peachey Carnehan, that's him, and Brother Daniel Dravot, that is *me*, and the less said about our professions the better, for we have been most things in our time. Soldier, sailor, compositor, photographer, proofreader, street-preacher, and correspondents of the 'Backwoodsman' when we thought the paper wanted one. Carnehan is sober, and so am I. Look at us first and see that's sure. It will save you cutting into my talk. We'll take one of your cigars apiece, and you shall see us light."

I watched the test. The men were absolutely sober, so I gave them each a tepid peg.

"Well *and* good," said Carnehan of the eyebrows, wip-

ing the froth from his mustache. "Let me talk now, Dan. We have been all over India, mostly on foot. We have been boiler-fitters, engine-drivers, petty contractors, and all that, and we have decided that India isn't big enough for such as us."

They certainly were too big for the office. Dravot's beard seemed to fill half the room and Carnehan's shoulders the other half, as they sat on the big table. Carnehan continued: "The country isn't half worked out, because they that governs it won't let you touch it. They spend all their blessed time in governing it, and you can't lift a spade, nor chip a rock, nor look for oil, nor anything like that, without all the government saying: 'Leave it alone and let us govern.' Therefore, such as it is, we will let it alone, and go away to some other place where a man isn't crowded and can come to his own. We are not little men, and there is nothing that we are afraid of except drink, and we have signed a contrack on that. *Therefore*, we are going away to be kings."

"Kings in our own right," muttered Dravot.

"Yes, of course," I said. "You've been tramping in the sun, and it's a very warm night, and hadn't you better sleep over the notion? Come to-morrow."

"Neither drunk nor sunstruck," said Dravot. "We have slept over the notion half a year, and require to see books and atlases, and we have decided that there is only one place now in the world that two strong men can Sar-a-*whack*. They call it Kafiristan. By my reckoning it's the top right-hand corner of Afghanistan, not more than three hundred miles from Peshawer. They have two and thirty heathen idols there, and we'll be the thirty-third. It's a mountainous country, and the women of those parts are very beautiful."

"But that is provided against in the contrack," said Carnehan. "Neither women nor liqu-or, Daniel."

"And that's all we know, except that no one has gone there, and they fight, and in any place where they fight a

man who knows how to drill men can always be a king. We shall go to those parts and say to any king we find: 'D'you want to vanquish your foes?' and we will show him how to drill men; for that we know better than anything else. Then we will subvert that king and seize his throne and establish a dy-nasty."

"You'll be cut to pieces before you're fifty miles across the border," I said. "You have to travel through Afghanistan to get to that country. It's one mass of mountains and peaks and glaciers, and no Englishman has been through it. The people are utter brutes, and even if you reached them you couldn't do anything."

"That's more like," said Carnehan. "If you could think us a little more mad we would be more pleased. We have come to you to know about this country, to read a book about it, and to be shown maps. We want you to tell us that we are fools and to show us your books." He turned to the book-cases.

"Are you at all in earnest?" I said.

"A little," said Dravot, sweetly. "As big a map as you have got, even if it's all blank where Kafiristan is, and any books you've got. We can read, though we aren't very educated."

I uncased the big thirty-two-miles-to-the-inch map of India, and two smaller frontier maps, hauled down volume INF-KAN of the "Encyclopedia Britannica," and the men consulted them.

"See here!" said Dravot, his thumb on the map. "Up to Jagdallak, Peachey and me know the road. We was there with Robert's army. We'll have to turn off to the right at Jagdallak through Laghmann territory. Then we get among the hills—fourteen thousand feet—fifteen thousand—it will be cold work there, but it don't look very far on the map."

I handed him Wood on the "Sources of the Oxus." Carnehan was deep in the "Encyclopedia."

"They're a mixed lot," said Dravot, reflectively; "and it

won't help us to know the names of their tribes. The more tribes the more they'll fight, and the better for us. From Jagdallak to Ashang. H'm!"

"But all the information about the country is as sketchy and inaccurate as can be," I protested. "No one knows anything about it really. Here's the file of the 'United Services' Institute.' Read what Bellew says."

"Blow Bellew!" said Carnehan. "Dan, they're an all-fired lot of heathens, but this book here says they think they're related to us English."

I smoked while the men pored over "Raverty," "Wood," the maps and the "Encyclopedia."

"There is no use your waiting," said Dravot, politely. "It's about four o'clock now. We'll go before six o'clock if you want to sleep, and we won't steal any of the papers. Don't you sit up. We're two harmless lunatics, and if you come to-morrow evening, down to the Serai, we'll say good-by to you."

"You *are* two fools," I answered. "You'll be turned back at the frontier or cut up the minute you set foot in Afghanistan. Do you want any money or a recommendation down-country? I can help you to the chance of work next week."

"Next week we shall be hard at work ourselves, thank you," said Dravot. "It isn't so easy being a king as it looks. When we've got our kingdom in going order we'll let you know, and you can come up and help us to govern it."

"Would two lunatics make a contrack like that?" said Carnehan, with subdued pride, showing me a greasy half-sheet of note-paper on which was written the following. I copied it, then and there, as a curiosity:

This Contract between me and you persuing witnesseth in the name of God—Amen and so forth.

(One) That me and you will settle this matter together: *i.e.*, to be Kings of Kafiristan.

(Two) That you and me will not, while this matter is being settled, look at any Liquor, nor any Woman black, white or brown, so as to get mixed up with one or the other harmful.

(Three) That we conduct ourselves with dignity and discretion, and if one of us gets into trouble the other will stay by him.

Signed by you and me this day.

Peachy Taliaferro Carnehan.

Daniel Dravot.

Both Gentlemen at Large.

"There was no need for the last article," said Carnehan, blushing modestly; "but it looks regular. Now, you know the sort of men that loafers are—we *are* loafers, Dan, until we get out of India—and *do* you think that we would sign a contrack like that unless we was in earnest? We have kept away from the two things that make life worth having."

"You won't enjoy your lives much longer if you are going to try this idiotic adventure. Don't set the office on fire," I said, "and go away before nine o'clock."

I left them still poring over the maps and making notes on the back of the "contrack." "Be sure to come down to the Serai to-morrow," were their parting words.

The Kumharsen Serai is the great four-square sink of humanity where the strings of camels and horses from the north load and unload. All the nationalities of Central Asia may be found there, and most of the folk of India proper. Balkh and Bokhara there meet Bengal and Bombay, and try to draw eye-teeth. You can buy ponies, turquoises, Persian pussy-cats, saddle-bags, fat-tailed sheep and musk in the Kumharsen Serai, and get many strange things for nothing. In the afternoon I went down there to see whether my friends intended to keep their word or were lying about drunk.

A priest attired in fragments of ribbons and rags stalked up to me, gravely twisting a child's paper whirligig. Behind him was his servant bending under the load of a crate

of mud toys. The two were loading up two camels, and the inhabitants of the Serai watched them with shrieks of laughter.

"The priest is mad," said a horse-dealer to me. "He is going up to Kabul to sell toys to the Amir. He will either be raised to honor or have his head cut off. He came in here this morning and has been behaving madly ever since."

"The witless are under the protection of God," stammered a flat-cheeked Usbeg in broken Hindoostanee. "They foretell future events."

"Would they could have foretold that my caravan would have been cut up by the Shinwaris almost within shadow of the pass!" grunted the Eusufzai agent of a Rajputana trading-house whose goods had been feloniously diverted into the hands of other robbers just across the border, and whose misfortunes were the laughing-stock of the bazaar. "Ohé, priest, whence come you, and whither do you go?"

"From Roum have I come," shouted the priest, waving his whirligig; "from Roum, blown by the breath of a hundred devils across the sea! Oh, thieves, robbers, liars, the blessing of Pir Khan on pigs, dogs, and perjurers! Who will take the Protected of God to the north to sell charms that are never still to the Amir? The camels shall not gall, the sons shall not fall sick, and the wives shall remain faithful while they are away, of the men who give me place in their caravan. Who will assist me to slipper the king of the Raas with a golden slipper with a silver heel? The protection of Pir Khan be upon his labors!" He spread out the skirts of his gaberdine and pirouetted between the lines of tethered horses.

"There starts a caravan from Peshawer to Kabul in twenty days, *Huzrut*," said the Eusufzai trader. "My camels go therewith. Do thou also go and bring us good luck."

"I will go even now!" shouted the priest. "I will depart upon my winged camels, and be at Peshawer in a day!

Ho! Hazar Mir Khan," he yelled to his servant, "drive out the camels, but let me first mount my own."

He leaped on the back of his beast as it knelt, and turning round to me, cried; "Come thou also, sahib, a little along the road, and I will sell thee a charm—an amulet that shall make thee king of Afghanistan."

Then the light broke upon me, and I followed the two camels out of the Serai till we reached open road and the priest halted.

"What d'you think o' that?" said he in English. "Carnehan can't talk their patter, so I've made him my servant. He makes a handsome servant. 'Tisn't for nothing that I've been knocking about the country for fourteen years. Didn't I do that talk neat? We'll hitch on to a caravan at Peshawer till we get to Jagdallak, and then we'll see if we can get donkeys for our camels, and strike into Kafiristan. Whirligigs for the Amir, oh Lor'! Put your hand under the camel-bags and tell me what you feel."

I felt the butt of a Martini, and another and another.

"Twenty of 'em," said Dravot, placidly. "Twenty of 'em, and ammunition to correspond, under the whirligigs and the mud dolls."

"Heaven help you if you are caught with those things!" I said. "A Martini is worth her weight in silver among the Pathans."

"Fifteen hundred rupees of capital—every rupee we could beg, borrow, or steal—are invested on these two camels," said Dravot. "We won't get caught. We're going through the Khaiber with a regular caravan. Who'd touch a poor mad priest?"

"Have you got everything you want?" I asked, overcome with astonishment.

"Not yet, but we shall soon. Give us a memento of your kindness, *brother*. You did me a service yesterday, and that time in Marwar. Half my kingdom shall you have, as the saying is." I slipped a small charm compass from my watch-chain and handed it up to the priest.

"Good-by," said Dravot, giving me hand cautiously. "It's the last time we'll shake hands with an Englishman these many days. Shake hands with him, Carnehan," he cried, as the second camel passed me.

Carnehan leaned down and shook hands. Then the camels passed away along the dusty road, and I was left alone to wonder. My eye could detect no failure in the disguises. The scene in the Serai attested that they were complete to the native mind. There was just the chance, therefore, that Carnehan and Dravot would be able to wander through Afghanistan without detection. But, beyond, they would find death, certain and awful death.

Ten days later a native friend of mine, giving me the news of the day from Peshawer, wound up his letter with: "There has been much laughter here on account of a certain mad priest who is going in his estimation to sell petty gauds and insignificant trinkets which he ascribes as great charms to H. H. the Amir of Bokhara. He passed through Peshawer and associated himself to the Second Summer caravan that goes to Kabul. The merchants are pleased because through superstition they imagine that such mad fellows bring good fortune."

The two, then, were beyond the border. I would have prayed for them, but that night a real king died in Europe and demanded an obituary notice.

. . . . . .

The wheel of the world swings through the same phases again and again. Summer passed and winter thereafter, and came and passed again. The daily paper continued, and I with it, and upon the third summer there fell a hot night, a night-issue, and a strained waiting for something to be telegraphed from the other side of the world, exactly as had happened before. A few great men had died in the past two years, the machines worked with more clatter, and some of the trees in the office garden were a few feet taller. But that was all the difference.

I passed over to the press-room, and went through just

such a scene as I have already described. The nervous tension was stronger than it had been two years before, and I felt the heat more acutely. At three o'clock I cried, "Print off," and turned to go, when there crept to my chair what was left of a man. He was bent into a circle, his head was sunk between his shoulders, and he moved his feet one over the other like a bear. I could hardly see whether he walked or crawled—this rag-wrapped, whining cripple who addressed me by name, crying that he was come back. "Can you give me a drink?" he whimpered. "For the Lord's sake, give me a drink!"

I went back to the office, the man following with groans of pain, and I turned up the lamp.

"Don't you know me?" he gasped, dropping into a chair, and he turned his drawn face, surmounted by a shock of gray hair, to the light.

I looked at him intently. Once before had I seen eyebrows that met over the nose in an inch-broad black band, but for the life of me I could not tell where.

"I don't know you," I said, handing him the whisky. "What can I do for you?"

He took a gulp of the spirit raw, and shivered in spite of the suffocating heat.

"I've come back," he repeated; "and I was the King of Kafiristan—me and Dravot—crowned kings we was! In this office we settled it—you setting there and giving us the books. I am Peachey—Peachey Taliaferro Carnehan, and you've been setting here ever since— Oh, Lord!"

I was more than a little astonished, and expressed my feelings accordingly.

"It's true," said Carnehan, with a dry cackle, nursing his feet, which were wrapped in rags. "True as gospel. Kings we were, with crowns upon our heads—me and Dravot—poor Dan—oh, poor, poor Dan, that would never take advice, not though I begged of him!"

"Take the whisky," I said, "and take your own time. Tell me all you can recollect of everything from beginning

to end. You got across the border on your camels, Dravot dressed as a mad priest and you his servant. Do you remember that?"

"I ain't mad—yet, but I shall be that way soon. Of course I remember. Keep looking at me, or may be my words will go all to pieces. Keep looking at me in my eyes and don't say anything."

I leaned forward and looked into his face as steadily as I could. He dropped one hand upon the table and I grasped it by the wrist. It was twisted like a bird's claw, and upon the back was a ragged, red, diamond-shaped scar.

"No, don't look there. Look at *me*," said Carnehan. "That comes afterward, but for the Lord's sake don't distrack me. We left with that caravan, me and Dravot playing all sorts of antics to amuse the people we were with. Dravot used to make us laugh in the evenings when all the people was cooking their dinners—cooking their dinners, and . . . what did they do then? They lighted little fires with sparks that went into Dravot's beard, and we all laughed—fit to die. Little red fires they was, going into Dravot's big red beard—so funny." His eyes left mine and he smiled foolishly.

"You went as far as Jagdallak with that caravan," I said at a venture, "after you had lighted those fires. To Jagdallak, where you turned off to try to get into Kafiristan."

"No, we didn't neither. What are you talking about? We turned off before Jagdallak, because we heard the roads was good. But they wasn't good enough for our two camels—mine and Dravot's. When we left the caravan, Dravot took off all his clothes and mine too, and said we would be heathen, because the Kaffers didn't allow Mohammedans to talk to them. So we dressed betwixt and between, and such a sight as Daniel Dravot I never saw yet nor expect to see again. He burned half his beard, and slung a sheep-skin over his shoulder, and shaved his head into patterns. He shaved mine, too, and made me wear outrageous things to

look like a heathen. That was in a most mountaineous country, and our camels couldn't go along any more because of the mountains. They were tall and black, and coming home I saw them fight like wild goats—there are lots of goats in Kafiristan. And these mountains, they never keep still, no more than the goats. Always fighting they are, and don't let you sleep at night."

"Take some more whisky," I said, very slowly. "What did you and Daniel Dravot do when the camels could go no further because of the rough roads that led into Kafiristan?"

"What did which do? There was a party called Peachey Taliaferro Carnehan that was with Dravot. Shall I tell you about him? He died out there in the cold. Slap from the bridge fell old Peachey, turning and twisting in the air like a penny whirligig that you can sell to the Amir. No; they was two for three ha'pence, those whirligigs, or I am much mistaken and woful sore. And then these camels were no use, and Peachey said to Dravot: 'For the Lord's sake, let's get out of this before our heads are chopped off,' and with that they killed the camels all among the mountains, not having anything in particular to eat, but first they took off the boxes with the guns and ammunition, till two men came along driving four mules. Dravot up and dances in front of them, singing, 'Sell me four mules.' Says the first man: 'If you are rich enough to buy you are rich enough to rob'; but before ever he could put his hand to his knife, Dravot breaks his neck over his knee, and the other party runs away. So Carnehan loaded the mules with the rifles that was taken off the camels, and together we starts forward into those bitter cold mountaineous parts, and never a road broader than the back of your hand."

He paused for a moment, while I asked him if he could remember the nature of the country through which he had journeyed.

"I am telling you as straight as I can, but my head isn't as good as it might be. They drove nails through it to make me hear better how Dravot died. The country was moun-

taineous and the mules were most contrary, and the inhabitants was dispersed and solitary. They went up and up, and down and down, and that other party, Carnehan, was imploring of Dravot not to sing and whistle so loud, for fear of bringing down the tremenjus avalanches. But Dravot says that if a king couldn't sing it wasn't worth being king, and whacked the mules over the rump, and never took no heed for ten cold days. We came to a big level valley all among the mountains, and the mules were near dead, so we killed them, not having anything in special for them or us to eat. We sat upon the boxes, and played odd and even with the cartridges that was jolted out.

"Then ten men with bows and arrows ran down that valley, chasing twenty men with bows and arrows, and the row was tremenjus. They was fair men—fairer than you or me—with yellow hair and remarkable well built. Says Dravot, unpacking the guns: 'This is the beginning of the business. We'll fight for the ten men,' and with that he fires two rifles at the twenty men, and drops one of them at two hundred yards from the rock where he was sitting. The other men began to run, but Carnehan and Dravot sits on the boxes picking them off at all ranges, up and down the valley. Then we goes up to the ten men that had run across the snow too, and they fires a footy little arrow at us. Dravot he shoots above their heads and they all falls down flat. Then he walks over them and kicks them, and then he lifts them up and shakes hands all round to make them friendly like. He calls them and gives them the boxes to carry, and waves his hand for all the world as though he was king already. They takes the boxes and him across the valley and up the hill into a pine wood on the top, where there was half a dozen big stone idols. Dravot he goes to the biggest—a fellow they call Imbra—and lays a rifle and a cartridge at his feet, rubbing his nose respectful with his own nose, patting him on the head, and saluting in front of it. He turns round to the men and nods his head and says: 'That's all right. I'm in the know too, and all these old jim-jams are my

friends.' Then he opens his mouth and points down it, and when the first man brings him food, he says, 'No'; and when the second man brings him food, he says, 'No'; but when one of the old priests and the boss of the village brings him food, he says, 'Yes'; very haughty, and eats it slow. That was how we came to our first village without any trouble, just as though we had tumbled from the skies. But we tumbled from one of those damned rope-bridges, you see, and you couldn't expect a man to laugh much after that."

"Take some more whisky and go on," I said. "That was the first village you came into. How did you get to be king?"

"I wasn't king," said Carnehan. "Dravot he was the king, and a handsome man he looked with the gold crown on his head and all. Him and the other party stayed in that village, and every morning Dravot sat by the side of the old Imbra, and the people came and worshiped. That was Dravot's order. Then a lot of men came into the valley, and Carnehan and Dravot picks them off with the rifles before they knew where they was, and runs down into the valley and up again the other side, and finds another village, same as the first one, and the people all falls down flat on their faces, and Dravot says: 'Now what is the trouble between you two villages?' and the people points to a woman, as fair as you or me, that was carried off, and Dravot takes her back to the first village and counts up the dead—eight there was. For each dead man Dravot pours a little milk on the ground and waves his arms like a whirligig and 'That's all right,' says he. Then he and Carnehan takes the big boss of each valley by the arm and walks them down into the valley, and shows them how to scratch a line with a spear right down the valley, and gives each a sod of turf from both sides o' the line. Then all the people comes down and shouts like the devil and all, and Dravot says: 'Go and dig the land, and be fruitful and multiply,' which they did, though they didn't understand. Then we asks the names of things in their lingo—bread and water and fire and idols and such,

and Dravot leads the priest of each village up to the idol, and says he must sit there and judge the people, and if anything goes wrong he is to be shot.

"Next week they was all turning up the land in the valley as quiet as bees and much prettier, and the priests heard all the complaints and told Dravot in dumb show what it was about. 'That's just the beginning,' says Dravot. 'They think we're gods.' He and Carnehan picks out twenty good men and shows them how to click off a rifle, and form fours, and advance in line; and they was very pleased to do so, and clever to see the hang of it. Then he takes out his pipe and his 'baccy-pouch and leaves one at one village, and one at the other, and off we two goes to see what was to be done in the next valley. That was all rock, and there was a little village there, and Carnehan says, 'Send 'em to the old valley to plant,' and takes 'em there and gives 'em some land that wasn't took before. They were a poor lot, and we blooded 'em with a kid before letting 'em into the new kingdom. That was to impress the people, and then they settled down quiet, and Carnehan went back to Dravot, who had got into another valley, all snow and ice and most mountaineous. There was no people there and the army got afraid, so Dravot shoots one of them, and goes on till he finds some people in a village, and the army explains that unless the people wants to be killed they had better not shoot their little matchlocks; for they had matchlocks. We makes friends with the priest and I stays there alone with two of the army, teaching the men how to drill, and a thundering big chief comes across the snow with kettle-drums and horns twanging, because he heard there was a new god kicking about. Carnehan sights for the brown of the men half a mile across the snow and wings one of them. Then he sends a message to the chief that, unless he wished to be killed, he must come and shake hands with me and leave his arms behind. The chief comes alone first, and Carnehan shakes hands with him and whirls his arms about him, same as Dravot used, and very much surprised that chief was, and strokes my eye-

brows. Then Carnehan goes alone to the chief, and asks him in dumb show if he had an enemy he hated. 'I have,' says the chief. So Carnehan weeds out the pick of his men, and sets the two of the army to show them drill, and at the end of two weeks the men can maneuver about as well as volunteers. So he marches with the chief to a great big plain on the top of a mountain, and the chief's men rushes into a village and takes it; we three Martinis firing into the brown of the enemy. So we took that village, too, and I gives the chief a rag from my coat and says, 'Occupy till I come,' which was scriptural. By way of a reminder, when me and the army was eighteen hundred yards away, I drops a bullet near him standing on the snow, and all the people falls flat on their faces. Then I sends a letter to Dravot, wherever he be by land or by sea."

At the risk of throwing the creature out of the train I interrupted, "How could you write a letter up yonder?"

"The letter? Oh! The letter! Keep looking at me between the eyes, please. It was a string-talk letter, that we'd learned the way of it from a blind beggar in the Punjab."

I remember that there had once come to the office a blind man with a knotted twig and a piece of string which he wound round the twig according to some cipher of his own. He could, after the lapse of days or hours, repeat the sentence which he had reeled up. He had reduced the alphabet to eleven primitive sounds; and tried to teach me his method but failed.

"I sent that letter to Dravot," said Carnehan; "and told him to come back because this kingdom was growing too big for me to handle, and then I struck for the first valley, to see how the priests were working. They called the village we took along with the chief, Bashkai, and the first village we took, Er-Heb. The priests at Er-Heb was doing all right, but they had a lot of pending cases about land to show me, and some men from another village had been firing arrows at night. I went out and looked for that village and fired four rounds at it from a thousand yards. That used

all the cartridges I cared to spend, and I waited for Dravot, who had been away two or three months, and I kept my people quiet.

"One morning I heard the devil's own noise of drums and horns, and Dan Dravot marches down the hill with his army and a tail of hundreds of men, and—which was the most amazing—a great gold crown on his head. 'My Gord, Carnehan,' says Daniel, 'this is a tremenjus business, and we've got the whole country as far as it's worth having. I am the son of Alexander by Queen Semiramis, and you're my younger brother and a god too! It's the biggest thing we've ever seen. I've been marching and fighting for six weeks with the army, and every footy little village for fifty miles has come in rejoiceful; and more than that, I've got the key of the whole show, as you'll see, and I've got a crown for you! I told 'em to make two of 'em at a place called Shu, where the gold lies in the rock like suet in mutton. Gold I've seen, and turquois I've kicked out of the cliffs, and there's garnets in the sands of the river, and here's a chunk of amber that a man brought me. Call up all the priests and, here, take your crown.'

"One of the men opens a black hair bag and I slips the crown on. It was too small and too heavy, but I wore it for the glory. Hammered gold it was—five pounds weight, like a hoop of a barrel.

" 'Peachey,' says Dravot, 'we don't want to fight no more. The craft's the trick, so help me!' and he brings forward that same chief that I left at Bashkai—Billy Fish we called him afterward, because he was so like Billy Fish that drove the big tank-engine at Mach on the Bolan in the old days. 'Shake hands with him,' says Dravot, and I shook hands and nearly dropped, for Billy Fish gave me the grip. I said nothing, but tried him with the fellowcraft grip. He answers, all right, and I tried the master's grip, but that was a slip. 'A fellowcraft he is!' I says to Dan. 'Does he know the word?' 'He does,' says Dan, 'and all the priests know. It's a miracle! The chiefs and the priests can work a fellow-

craft lodge in a way that's very like ours, and they've cut the marks on the rocks, but they don't know the third degree, and they've come to find out. It's Gord's truth. I've known these long years that the Afghans knew up to the fellowcraft degree, but this is a miracle. A god and a grand-master of the craft am I, and a lodge in the third degree I will open, and we'll raise the head priests and the chiefs of the villages.'

"'It's against all the law,' I says, 'holding a lodge without warrant from any one; and we never held office in any lodge.'

"'It's a masterstroke of policy,' says Dravot. 'It means running the country as easy as a four-wheeled bogy on a down grade. We can't stop to inquire now, or they'll turn against us. I've forty chiefs at my heel, and passed and raised according to their merit they shall be. Billet these men on the villages and see that we run up a lodge of some kind. The temple of Imbra will do for the lodge-room. The women must make aprons as you show them. I'll hold a levee of chiefs to-night and lodge to-morrow.'

"I was fair run off my legs, but I wasn't such a fool as not to see what a pull this craft business gave us. I showed the priests' families how to make aprons of the degrees, but for Dravot's apron the blue border and marks was made of turquois lumps on white hide, not cloth. We took a great square stone in the temple for the master's chair, and little stones for the officers' chairs, and painted the black pavement with white squares, and did what we could to make things regular.

"At the levee which was held that night on the hillside with big bonfires, Dravot gives out that him and me were gods and sons of Alexander, and past grand-masters in the craft, and was to come to make Kafiristan a country where every man should eat in peace and drink in quiet, and specially obey us. Then the chiefs come round to shake hands, and they was so hairy and white and fair it was just shaking hands with old friends. We gave them names according

as they was like men we had known in India—Billy Fish, Holly Dilworth, Pikky Kergan that was bazaar-master when I was at Mhow, and so on and so on.

"*The* most amazing miracle was at lodge next night. One of the old priests was watching us continuous, and I felt uneasy, for I knew we'd have to fudge the ritual, and I didn't know what the men knew. The old priest was a stranger come in from beyond the village of Bashkai. The minute Dravot puts on the master's apron that the girls had made for him, the priest fetches a whoop and a howl, and tries to overturn the stone that Dravot was sitting on. 'It's all up now,' I says. 'That comes of meddling with the craft without warrant!' Dravot never winked an eye, not when ten priests took and tilted over the grand-master's chair—which was to say the stone of Imbra. The priest begins rubbing the bottom end of it to clear away the black dirt, and presently he shows all the other priests the master's mark, same as was on Dravot's apron, cut into the stone. Not even the priests of the temple of Imbra knew it was there. The old chap falls flat on his face at Dravot's feet and kisses 'em. 'Luck again,' says Dravot, across the lodge to me, 'they say it's the missing mark that no one could understand the why of. We're more than safe now.' Then he bangs the butt of his gun for a gavel and says: 'By virtue of the authority vested in me by my own right hand the help of Peachey, I declare myself grand-master of all Free Masonry in Kafiristan in this the mother lodge o' the country, and King of Kafiristan equally with Peachey!' At that he puts on his crown and I puts on mine—I was doing senior warden—and we opens the lodge in most ample form. It was a amazing miracle! The priests moved in lodge through the first two degrees almost without telling, as if the memory was coming back to them. After that, Peachey and Dravot raised such as was worthy—high priests and chiefs of far-off villages. Billy Fish was the first, and I can tell you we scared the soul out of him. It was not in any way according to ritual, but it served our turn. We didn't

raise more than ten of the biggest men, because we didn't want to make the degree common. And they was clamoring to be raised.

"'In another six months,' says Dravot, 'we'll hold another communication and see how you are working.' Then he asks them about their villages, and learns that they was fighting one against the other, and were fair sick and tired of it. And when they wasn't doing that they was fighting with the Mohammedans. 'You can fight those when they come into our country,' says Dravot. 'Tell off every tenth man of your tribes for a frontier guard, and send two hundred at a time to this valley to be drilled. Nobody is going to be shot or speared any more so long as he does well, and I know that you won't cheat me because you're white people —sons of Alexander—and not like common, black Mohammedans. You are *my* people, and by God,' says he, running off into English at the end—'I'll make a damned fine nation of you, or I'll die in the making!'

"I can't tell all we did for the next six months, because Dravot did a lot I couldn't see the hang of, and he learned their lingo in a way I never could. My work was to help the people plow, and now and again go out with some of the army and see what the other villagers were doing, and make 'em throw rope-bridges across the ravines which cut up the country horrid. Dravot was very kind to me, but when he walked up and down in the pine wood pulling that bloody red beard of his with both fists I knew he was thinking plans I could not advise him about, and I just waited for orders.

"But Dravot never showed me disrespect before the people. They were afraid of me and the army, but they loved Dan. He was the best of friends with the priests and the chiefs; but any one could come across the hills with a complaint and Dravot would hear him out fair, and call four priests together and say what was to be done. He used to call in Billy Fish from Bashkai, and Pikky Kergan from Shu, and an old chief we called Kafuzelum—it was like enough to his real name—and hold councils with 'em when

there was any fighting to be done in small villages. That was his council of war, and the four priests of Bashkai, Shu, Khawak, and Madora was his privy council. Between the lot of 'em they sent me, with forty men and twenty rifles, and sixty men carrying turquoises, into the Ghorband country to buy those hand-made Martini rifles, that come out of the Amir's workshops at Kabul, from one of the Amir's Herati regiments that would have sold the very teeth out of their mouths for turquoises.

I stayed in Ghorband a month, and gave the governor there the pick of my baskets for hush-money, and bribed the colonel of the regiment some more, and, between the two and the tribes-people, we got more than a hundred hand-made Martinis, a hundred good Kohat Jezails that'll throw to six hundred yards, and forty man-loads of very bad ammunition for the rifles. I came back with what I had, and distributed 'em among the men that the chiefs sent in to me to drill. Dravot was too busy to attend to those things, but the old army that we first made helped me, and we turned out five hundred men that could drill, and two hundred that knew how to hold arms pretty straight. Even those corkscrewed, hand-made guns was a miracle to them. Dravot talked big about powder-shops and factories, walking up and down in the pine wood when the winter was coming in.

"'I won't make a nation,' says he. 'I'll make an empire! These men aren't niggers; they're English! Look at their eyes—look at their mouths. Look at the way they stand up. They sit on chairs in their own houses. They're the Lost Tribes, or something like it, and they've grown to be English. I'll take a census in the spring if the priests don't get frightened. There must be a fair two million of 'em in these hills. The villages are full o' little children. Two million people—two hundred and fifty thousand fighting men—and all English! They only want the rifles and a little drilling. Two hundred and fifty thousand men, ready to cut in on Russia's right flank when she tried for India! Peachey, man,' he says, chewing his beard in great hunks,

we shall be emperors—emperors of the earth! Rajah Brooke will be a suckling to us. I'll treat with the viceroy on equal terms. I'll ask him to send me twelve picked English—twelve that I know of—to help us govern a bit. There's Mackray, sergeant-pensioner of Segowli—many's the good dinner he's given me, and his wife a pair of trousers. There's Dónkin, the warder of Tounghoo Jail; there's hundreds that I could lay my hand on if I was in India. The viceroy shall do it for me. I'll send a man through in the spring for those men, and I'll write for a dispensation from the grand lodge for what I've done as grand-master. That—and all the Sniders that'll be thrown out when the native troops in India take up the Martini. They'll be worn smooth, but they'll do for fighting in these hills. Twelve English, a hundred thousand Sniders run through the Amir's country in driblets—I'd be content with twenty thousand in one year—and we'd be an empire. When everything was ship-shape, I'd hand over the crown—this crown I'm wearing now—to Queen Victoria on my knees, and she'd say: "Rise up, Sir Daniel Dravot." Oh, it's big! It's big, I tell you! But there's so much to be done in every place—Bashkai, Khawak, Shu, and everywhere else.'

"'What is it?' I says. 'There are no more men coming in to be drilled this autumn. Look at those fat, black clouds. They're bringing the snow.'

"'It isn't that,' says Daniel, putting his hand very hard on my shoulder; 'and I don't wish to say anything that's against you, for no other living man would have followed me and made me what I am as you have done. You're a first-class commander-in-chief, and the people know you; but—it's a big country, and somehow you can't help me, Peachey, in the way I want to be helped.'

"'Go to your blasted priests, then!' I said, and I was sorry when I made that remark, but it did hurt me sort to find Daniel talking so superior when I'd drilled all the men, and done all he told me.

"'Don't let's quarrel, Peachey,' says Daniel without

cursing. 'You're a king too, and the half of this kingdom is yours; but can't you see, Peachey, we want cleverer men than us now—three or four of 'em, that we can scatter about for our deputies. It's a hugeous great state, and I can't always tell the right thing to do, and I haven't time for all I want to do, and here's the winter coming on and all.' He put half his beard into his mouth, and it was as red as the gold of his crown.

"'I'm sorry, Daniel,' says I. 'I've done all I could. I've drilled the men and shown the people how to stack their oats better; and I've brought in those tinware rifles from Ghorband—but I know what you're driving at. I take it kings always feel oppressed that way.'

"'There's another thing too,' says Dravot, walking up and down. 'The winter's coming and these people won't be giving much trouble, and if they do we can't move about. I want a wife.'

"'For God's sake leave the women alone!' I says. 'We've both got all the work we can do, though I am a fool. Remember the contrack, and keep clear o' women.'

"'The contrack only lasted till such time as we was kings; and kings we have been these months past,' says Dravot, weighing his crown in his hand. 'You go get a wife too, Peachey—a nice, strappin', plump girl that'll keep you warm in the winter. They're prettier than English girls, and we can take the pick of 'em. Boil 'em once or twice in hot water, and they'll come as fair as chicken and ham.'

"'Don't tempt me!' I says. 'I will not have any dealings with a woman, not till we are a dam' side more settled than we are now. I've been doing the work o' two men, and you've been doing the work o' three. Let's lie off a bit, and see if we can get some better tobacco from Afghan country and run in some good liquor; but no women.'

"'Who's talking o' *women?*' says Dravot. 'I said *wife*—a queen to breed a king's son for the king. A queen out of the strongest tribe, that'll make them your blood-brothers, and that'll lie by your side and tell you all

the people thinks about you and their own affairs. That's what I want.'

" 'Do you remember that Bengali woman I kept at Mogul Serai when I was a plate-layer?' says I. 'A fat lot o' good she was to me. She taught me the lingo and one or two other things; but what happened? She ran away with the station-master's servant and half my month's pay. Then she turned up at Dadur Junction in tow of a half-caste, and had the impudence to say I was her husband—all among the drivers in the running-shed!'

" 'We've done with that,' says Dravot. 'These women are whiter than you or me, and a queen I will have for the winter months.'

" 'For the last time o' asking, Dan, do *not*,' I says. 'It'll only bring us harm. The Bible says that kings ain't to waste their strength on women, 'specially when they've got a new raw kingdom to work over.'

" 'For the last time of answering I will,' said Dravot, and he went away through the pine-trees looking like a big red devil. The low sun hit his crown and beard on one side, and the two blazed like hot coals.

"But getting a wife was not as easy as Dan thought. He put it before the council, and there was no answer till Billy Fish said that he'd better ask the girls. Dravot damned them all round. 'What's wrong with me?' he shouts, standing by the idol Imbra. 'Am I a dog or am I not enough of a man for your wenches? Haven't I put the shadow of my hand over this country? Who stopped the last Afghan raid?' It was me really, but Dravot was too angry to remember. 'Who bought your guns? Who repaired the bridges? Who's the grand-master of the sign cut in the stone?' and he thumped his hand on the block that he used to sit on in lodge, and at council, which opened like lodge always. Billy Fish said nothing and no more did the others. 'Keep your hair on, Dan,' said I; 'and ask the girls. That's how it's done at home, and these people are quite English.'

" 'The marriage of the king is a matter of state,' says

Dan, in a white-hot rage, for he could feel, I hope, that he was going against his better mind. He walked out of the council-room, and the others sat still, looking at the ground.

"'Billy Fish,' says I to the chief of Bashkai, 'what's the difficulty here? A straight answer to a true friend.' 'You know,' says Billy Fish. 'How should a man tell you who know everything? How can daughters of men marry gods or devils? It's not proper.'

"I remember something like that in the Bible; but if, after seeing us as long as they had, they still believed we were gods, it wasn't for me to undeceive them.

"'A god can do anything,' says I. 'If the king is fond of a girl he'll not let her die.' 'She'll have to,' said Billy Fish. 'There are all sorts of gods and devils in these mountains, and now and again a girl marries one of them and isn't seen any more. Besides, you two know the mark cut in the stone. Only the gods know that. We thought you were men till you showed the sign of the master.'

"I wished then that we had explained about the loss of the genuine secrets of a master-mason at the first go-off; but I said nothing. All that night there was a blowing of horns in a little dark temple half-way down the hill, and I heard a girl crying fit to die. One of the priests told us that she was being prepared to marry the king.

"'I'll have no nonsense of that kind,' says Dan. 'I don't want to interfere with your customs, but I'll take my own wife.' 'The girl's a little bit afraid,' says the priest. 'She thinks she's going to die, and they are a-heartening of her up down in the temple.'

"'Hearten her very tender, then,' says Dravot, 'or I'll hearten you with the butt of a gun so that you'll never want to be heartened again.' He licked his lips, did Dan, and stayed up walking about more than half the night, thinking of the wife that he was going to get in the morning. I wasn't any means comfortable, for I knew that dealings with a woman in foreign parts, though you was a crowned king twenty times over, could not but be risky. I got up very

early in the morning while Dravot was asleep, and I saw the priests talking together in whispers, and the chiefs talking together too, and they looked at me out of the corners of their eyes.

"'What is up, Fish?' I says to the Bashkai man, who was wrapped up in his furs and looking splendid to behold.

"'I can't rightly say,' says he; 'but if you can induce the king to drop all this nonsense about marriage, you'll be doing him and me and yourself a great service.'

"'That I do believe,' says I. 'But sure, you know, Billy, as well as me, having fought against and for us, that the king and me are nothing more than two of the finest men that God Almighty ever made. Nothing more, I do assure you.'

"'That may be,' says Billy Fish, 'and yet I should be sorry if it was.' He sinks his head upon his great fur cloak for a minute and thinks. 'King,' says he, 'be you man or god or devil, I'll stick by you to-day. I have twenty of my men with me, and they will follow me. We'll go to Bashkai until the storm blows over.'

"A little snow had fallen in the night, and everything was white except the greasy fat clouds that blew down and down from the north. Dravot came out with his crown on his head, swinging his arms and stamping his feet, and looking more pleased than Punch.

"'For the last time, drop it, Dan,' says I in a whisper. 'Billy Fish here says that there will be a row.'

"'A row among my people!' says Dravot. 'Not much. Peachey, you're a fool not to get a wife, too. Where's the girl?' says he with a voice as loud as the braying of a jackass. 'Call up all the chiefs and priests, and let the emperor see if his wife suits him.'

"There was no need to call any one. They were all there leaning on their guns and spears round the clearing in the center of the pine wood. A deputation of priests went down to the little temple to bring up the girl, and the horns blew up fit to wake the dead. Billy Fish saunters round and gets

as close to Daniel as he could, and behind him stood his twenty men with matchlocks. Not a man of them under six feet. I was next to Dravot, and behind me was twenty men of the regular army. Up comes the girl, and a strapping wench she was, covered with silver and turquoises, but white as death, and looking back every minute at the priests.

"'She'll do,' says Dan, looking her over. 'What's to be afraid of, lass? Come and kiss me.' He put his arm round her. She shut her eyes, gives a bit of a squeak, and down goes her face in the side of Dan's flaming red beard.

"'The slut's bitten me!' says he, clapping his hand to his neck, and, sure enough, his hand was red with blood. Billy Fish and two of his matchlock-men catches hold of Dan by the shoulders and drags him into the Bashkai lot, while the priests howls in their lingo: 'Neither god nor devil, but a man!' I was all taken aback, for a priest cut at me in front, and the army behind began firing into the Bashkai men.

"'God A-mighty!' says Dan. 'What is the meaning o' this?'

"'Come back! Come away!' says Billy Fish. 'Ruin and mutiny is the matter. We'll break for Bashkai if we can.'

"I tried to give some sort of orders to my men—the men o' the regular army—but it was no use, so I fired into the brown of 'em with an English Martini and drilled three beggars in a line. The valley was full of shouting, howling creatures, and every soul was shrieking, 'Not a god nor a devil, but only a man!' The Bashkai troops stuck to Billy Fish all they were worth, but their matchlocks wasn't half as good as the Kabul breech-loaders, and four of them dropped. Dan was bellowing like a bull, for he was very wrathy; and Billy Fish had a hard job to prevent him running out at the crowd.

"'We can't stand,' says Billy Fish. 'Make a run for it down the valley! The whole place is against us.' The matchlock-men ran, and we went down the valley in spite

of Dravot's protestations. He was swearing horribly and crying out that he was a king. The priests rolled great stones on us, and the regular army fired hard, and there wasn't more than six men, not counting Dan, Billy Fish, and me, that came down to the bottom of the valley alive.

"'Then they stopped firing and the horn in the temple blew again. 'Come away—for God's sake come away!' says Billy Fish. 'They'll send runners out to all the villages before ever we get to Bashkai. I can protect you there, but I can't do anything now.'

"My own notion is that Dan began to go mad in his head from that hour. He stared up and down like a stuck pig. Then he was all for walking back alone and killing the priests with his bare hands; which he could have done. 'An emperor am I,' says Daniel, 'and next year I shall be a knight of the queen.'

" 'All right, Dan,' says I; 'but come along now while there's time.'

" 'It's your fault,' says he, 'for not looking after your army better. There was mutiny in the midst, and you didn't know—you damned engine-driving, plate-laying, missionary's-pass-hunting hound!' He sat upon a rock and called me every foul name he could lay tongue to. I was too heart-sick to care, though it was all his foolishness that brought the smash.

" 'I'm sorry, Dan,' says I, 'but there's no accounting for natives. This business is our fifty-seven. May be we'll make something out of it yet, when we've got to Bashkai.'

" 'Let's get to Bashkai, then,' says Dan, 'and, by God, when I come back here again I'll sweep the valley so there isn't a bug in a blanket left!'

"We walked all that day, and all that night Dan was stumping up and down on the snow, chewing his beard and muttering to himself.

" 'There's no hope o' getting clear,' said Billy Fish. 'The priests will have sent runners to the villages to say that you are only men. Why didn't you stick on as gods till things

was more settled? I'm a dead man,' says Billy Fish, and he throws himself down on the snow and begins to pray to his gods.

"Next morning we was in a cruel bad country—all up and down, no level ground at all, and no food either. The six Bashkai men looked at Billy Fish hungry-wise as if they wanted to ask something, but they said never a word. At noon we came to the top of a flat mountain all covered with snow, and when we climbed up into it, behold, there was an army in position waiting in the middle!

" 'The runners have been very quick,' says Billy Fish, with a little bit of a laugh. 'They are waiting for us.'

"Three or four men began to fire from the enemy's side, and a chance shot took Daniel in the calf of the leg. That brought him to his senses. He looks across the snow at the army, and sees the rifles that we had brought into the country.

" 'We're done for,' says he. 'They are Englishmen, these people—and it's my blasted nonsense that has brought you to this. Get back, Billy Fish, and take your men away; you've done what you could, and now cut for it. Carnehan,' says he, 'shake hands with me and go along with Billy. May be they won't kill you. I'll go and meet 'em alone. It's me that did it. Me, the king!'

" 'Go!' says I. 'Go to hell, Dan. I'm with you here. Billy Fish, you clear out, and we two will meet those folk.'

" 'I'm a chief,' says Billy Fish, quite quiet. 'I stay with you. My men can go.'

"The Bashkai fellows didn't wait for a second word, but ran off, and Dan and me and Billy Fish walked across to where the drums were drumming and the horns were horning. It was cold—awful cold. I've got that cold in the back of my head now. There's a lump of it there."

The punka coolies had gone to sleep. Two kerosene lamps were blazing in the office, and the perspiration poured down my face and splashed on the blotter as I leaned forward. Carnehan was shivering, and I feared that his mind might

go. I wiped my face, took a fresh grip of the piteously mangled hands, and said: "What happened after that?"

The momentary shift of my eyes had broken the clear current.

"What was you pleased to say?" whined Carnehan. "They took them without any sound. Not a little whisper all along the snow, not though the king knocked down the first man that set hand on him—not though old Peachey fired his last cartridge into the brown of 'em. Not a single solitary sound did those swines make. They just closed up tight, and I tell you their furs stunk. There was a man called Billy Fish, a good friend of us all, and they cut his throat, sir, then and there, like a pig; and the king kicks up the bloody snow and says: 'We've had a dashed fine run for our money. What's coming next?' But Peachey, Peachey Taliaferro, I tell you, sir, in confidence as betwixt two friends, he lost his head, sir. No, he didn't neither. The king lost his head, so he did, all along o' one of those cunning rope-bridges. Kindly let me have the paper-cutter, sir. It tilted this way. They marched him a mile across that snow to a rope-bridge over a ravine with a river at the bottom. You may have seen such. They prodded him behind like an ox. 'Damn your eyes!' says the king. 'D'you suppose I can't die like a gentleman?' He turns to Peachey—Peachey that was crying like a child. 'I've brought you to this, Peachey,' says he. 'Brought you out of your happy life to be killed in Kafiristan, where you was late commander-in-chief of the emperor's forces. Say you forgive me, Peachey.' 'I do,' says Peachey. 'Fully and freely do I forgive you, Dan.' 'Shake hands, Peachey,' says he. 'I'm going now.' Out he goes, looking neither right nor left, and when he was plumb in the middle of those dizzy dancing ropes, 'Cut, you beggars,' he shouts; and they cut, and old Dan fell, turning round and round and round, twenty thousand times, for he took half an hour to fall till he struck the water, and I could see his body caught on a rock with the gold crown close beside.

"But do you know what they did to Peachey between two pine-trees? They crucified him, sir, as Peachey's hands will show. They used wooden pegs for his hands and his feet; and he didn't die. He hung there and screamed, and they took him down next day, and said it was a miracle that he wasn't dead. They took him down—poor old Peachey that hadn't done them any harm—that hadn't done them any . . ."

He rocked to and fro and wept bitterly, wiping his eyes with the back of his scarred hands and moaning like a child for some ten minutes.

"They was cruel enough to feed him up in the temple, because they said he was more of a god than old Daniel that was a man. Then they turned him out on the snow, and told him to go home, and Peachey came home in about a year, begging along the roads quite safe; for Daniel Dravot he walked before and said: 'Come along, Peachey. It's a big thing we're doing.' The mountains they danced at night, and the mountains they tried to fall on Peachey's head, but Dan he held up his hand, and Peachey came along bent double. He never let go of Dan's hand, and he never let go of Dan's head. They gave it to him as a present in the temple, to remind him not to come again, and though the crown was pure gold, and Peachey was starving, never would Peachey sell the same. You knew Dravot, sir! You knew Right Worshipful Brother Dravot! Look at him now!"

He fumbled in the mass of rags round his bent waist; brought out a black horsehair bag embroidered with silver thread; and shook therefrom on to my table—the dried, withered head of Daniel Dravot! The morning sun that had long been paling the lamps struck the red beard and blind sunken eyes; struck, too, a heavy circlet of gold studded with raw turquoises, that Carnehan placed tenderly on the battered temples.

"You behold now," said Carnehan, "the emperor in his habit as he lived—the King of Kafiristan with his crown upon his head. Poor old Daniel that was a monarch once!"

I shuddered, for, in spite of defacements manifold, I recognized the head of the man of Marwar Junction. Carnehan rose to go. I attempted to stop him. He was not fit to walk abroad. "Let me take away the whisky, and give me a little money," he gasped. "I was a king once. I'll go to the deputy commissioner and ask to set in the poor-house till I get my health. No, thank you, I can't wait till you get a carriage for me. I've urgent private affairs—in the south—at Marwar."

He shambled out of the office and departed in the direction of the deputy commissioner's house. That day at noon I had occasion to go down the blinding hot Mall, and I saw a crooked man crawling along the white dust of the roadside, his hat in his hand, quavering dolorously after the fashion of street-singers at home. There was not a soul in sight, and he was out of all possible earshot of the houses. And he sung through his nose, turning his head from right to left:

"The Son of Man goes forth to war,
A golden crown to gain;
His blood-red banner streams afar—
Who follows in his train?"

I waited to hear no more, but put the poor wretch into my carriage and drove him off to the nearest missionary for eventual transfer to the asylum. He repeated the hymn twice while he was with me whom he did not in the least recognize, and I left him singing it to the missionary.

Two days later I inquired after his welfare of the superintendent of the asylum.

"He was admitted suffering from sunstroke. He died early yesterday morning," said the superintendent. "Is it true that he was half an hour bareheaded in the sun at midday?"

"Yes," said I, "but do you happen to know if he had anything upon him by any chance when he died?"

"Not to my knowledge," said the superintendent.

And there the matter rests.

WEE WILLIE WINKIE

AND OTHER CHILD STORIES

PREFACE

THIS is the last book of the series, and it naturally ends with the little children, who always trot after the tail of any procession. Only women understand children thoroughly; but if a mere man keeps very quiet, and humbles himself properly, and refrains from talking down to his superiors, the children will sometimes be good to him and let him see what they think about the world. But, even after patient investigation and the condescension of the nursery, it is hard to draw babies correctly.

RUDYARD KIPLING.

WEE WILLIE WINKIE

"An officer and a gentleman"

HIS full name was Percival William Williams, but he picked up the other name in a nursery-book, and that was the end of the christened titles. His mother's *ayah* called him Willie-*Baba*, but as he never paid the faintest attention to anything that the *ayah* said, her wisdom did not help matters.

His father was the colonel of the 195th, and as soon as Wee Willie Winkie was old enough to understand what military discipline meant, Colonel Williams put him under it. There was no other way of managing the child. When he

was good for a week, he drew good-conduct pay; and when he was bad, he was deprived of his good-conduct stripe. Generally he was bad, for India offers so many chances to little six-year-olds of going wrong.

Children resent familiarity from strangers, and Wee Willie Winkie was a very particular child. Once he accepted an acquaintance, he was graciously pleased to thaw. He accepted Brandis, a subaltern of the 195th, on sight. Brandis was having tea at the colonel's, and Wee Willie Winkie entered, strong in the possession of a good-conduct badge won for not chasing the hens round the compound. He regarded Brandis with gravity for at least ten minutes, and then delivered himself of his opinion.

"I like you," said he, slowly, getting off his chair and coming over to Brandis. "I like you. I shall call you Coppy, because of your hair. Do you *mind* being called Coppy? it is because of ve hair, you know."

Here was one of the most embarrassing of Wee Willie Winkie's peculiarities. He would look at a stranger for some time, and then, without warning or explanation, would give him a name. And the name stuck. No regimental penalties could break Wee Willie Winkie of this habit. He lost his good-conduct badge for christening the commissioner's wife "Pobs"; but nothing that the colonel could do made the station forego the nickname, and Mrs. Collen remained Mrs. "Pobs" till the end of her stay. So Brandis was christened "Coppy," and rose, therefore, in the estimation of the regiment.

If Wee Willie Winkie took an interest in any one, the fortunate man was envied alike by the mess and the rank and file. And in their envy lay no suspicion of self-interest. "The colonel's son" was idolized on his own merits entirely. Yet Wee Willie Winkie was not lovely. His face was permanently freckled, as his legs were permanently scratched, and in spite of his mother's almost tearful remonstrances he had insisted upon having his long yellow locks cut short in the military fashion. "I want my hair like Sergeant Tum-

mil's," said Wee Willie Winkie, and his father abetting, the sacrifice was accomplished.

Three weeks after the bestowal of his youthful affections on Lieutenant Brandis—henceforward to be called "Coppy" for the sake of brevity—Wee Willie Winkie was destined to behold strange things and far beyond his comprehension.

Coppy returned his liking with interest. Coppy had let him wear for five rapturous minutes his own big sword—just as tall as Wee Willie Winkie. Coppy had promised him a terrier puppy; and Coppy had permitted him to witness the miraculous operation of shaving. Nay, more—Coppy had said that even he, Wee Willie Winkie, would rise in time to the ownership of a box of shiny knives, a silver soap-box, and a silver-handled "sputter-brush," as Wee Willie Winkie called it. Decidedly, there was no one, except his father, who could give or take away good-conduct badges at pleasure, half so wise, strong, and valiant as Coppy with the Afghan and Egyptian medals on his breast. Why, then, should Coppy be guilty of the unmanly weakness of kissing —vehemently kissing—a "big girl," Miss Allardyce to wit? In the course of a morning ride, Wee Willie Winkie had seen Coppy so doing, and, like the gentleman he was, had promptly wheeled round and cantered back to his groom, lest the groom should also see.

Under ordinary circumstances he would have spoken to his father, but he felt instinctively that this was a matter on which Coppy ought first to be consulted.

"Coppy," shouted Wee Willie Winkie, reining up outside that subaltern's bungalow early one morning—"I want to see you, Coppy!"

"Come in, young 'un," returned Coppy, who was at early breakfast in the midst of his dogs. "What mischief have you been getting into now?"

Wee Willie Winkie had done nothing notoriously bad for three days, and so stood on a pinnacle of virtue.

"I've been doing nothing bad," said he, curling himself into a long chair with a studious affectation of the colonel's

languor after a hot parade. He buried his freckled nose in a teacup and, with eyes staring roundly over the rim, asked: "I say, Coppy, is it pwoper to kiss big girls?"

"By Jove! You're beginning early. Who do you want to kiss?"

"No one. My muvver's always kissing me if I don't stop her. If it isn't pwoper, how was you kissing Major Allardyce's big girl last morning, by ve canal?"

Coppy's brow wrinkled. He and Miss Allardyce had with great craft managed to keep their engagement secret for a fortnight. There were urgent and imperative reasons why Major Allardyce should not know how matters stood for at least another month, and this small marplot had discovered a great deal too much.

"I saw you," said Wee Willie Winkie, calmly. "But ve groom didn't see. "I said, '*Hut jao.*' "

"Oh, you had that much sense, you young rip," groaned poor Coppy, half amused and half angry. "And how many people may you have told about it?"

"Only me myself. You didn't tell when I twied to wide ve buffalo ven my pony was lame; and I fought you wouldn't like."

"Winkie," said Coppy, enthusiastically, shaking the small hand, "you're the best of good fellows. Look here, you can't understand all these things. One of these days—hang it, how can I make you see it!—I'm going to marry Miss Allardyce, and then she'll be Mrs. Coppy, as you say. If your young mind is so scandalized at the idea of kissing big girls, go and tell your father."

"What will happen?" said Wee Willie Winkie, who firmly believed that his father was omnipotent.

"I shall get into trouble," said Coppy, playing his trump card with an appealing look at the holder of the ace.

"Ven I won't," said Wee Willie Winkie, briefly. "But my faver says it's un-man-ly to be always kissing, and I didn't fink *you'd* do vat, Coppy."

"I'm not always kissing, old chap. It's only now and

then, and when you're bigger you'll do it, too. Your father meant it's not good for little boys."

"Ah!" said Wee Willie Winkie, now fully enlightened. "It's like ve sputter-brush?"

"Exactly," said Coppy, gravely.

"But I don't fink I'll ever want to kiss big girls, nor no one, 'cept my muvver. And I *must* vat, you know."

There was a long pause, broken by Wee Willie Winkie.

"Are you fond of vis big girl, Coppy?"

"Awfully!" said Coppy.

"Fonder van you are of Bell or ve Butcha—or me?"

"It's in a different way," said Coppy. "You see, one of these days Miss Allardyce will belong to me, but you'll grow up and command the regiment and—all sorts of things. It's quite different, you see."

"Very well," said Wee Willie Winkie, rising. "If you're fond of ve big girl, I won't tell any one. I must go now."

Coppy rose and escorted his small guest to the door, adding: "You're the best of little fellows, Winkie. I tell you what. In thirty days from now you can tell if you like—tell any one you like."

Thus the secret of the Brandis-Allardyce engagement was dependent on a little child's word. Coppy, who knew Wee Willie Winkie's idea of truth, was at ease, for he felt that he would not break promises. Wee Willie Winkie betrayed a special and unusual interest in Miss Allardyce, and, slowly revolving round that embarrassed young lady, was used to regard her gravely with unwinking eye. He was trying to discover why Coppy should have kissed her. She was not half so nice as his own mother. On the other hand, she was Coppy's property, and would in time belong to him. Therefore it behooved him to treat her with as much respect as Coppy's big sword or shiny pistol.

The idea that he shared a great secret in common with Coppy kept Wee Willie Winkie unusually virtuous for three weeks. Then the Old Adam broke out, and he made what he called a "camp fire" at the bottom of the garden. How

could he have foreseen that the flying sparks would have lighted the colonel's little hay-rick and consumed a week's store for the horses? Sudden and swift was the punishment —deprivation of the good-conduct badge and, most sorrowful of all, two days' confinement to barracks—the house and veranda—coupled with the withdrawal of the light of his father's countenance.

He took the sentence like the man he strove to be, drew himself up with a quivering under-lip, saluted, and, once clear of the room, ran to weep bitterly in his nursery—called by him "my quarters." Coppy came in the afternoon and attempted to console the culprit.

"I'm under awwest," said Wee Willie Winkie, mournfully, "and I didn't ought to speak to you."

Very early the next morning he climbed on to the roof of the house—that was not forbidden—and beheld Miss Allardyce going for a ride.

"Where are you going?" cried Wee Willie Winkie.

"Across the river," she answered, and trotted forward.

Now the cantonment in which the 195th lay was bounded on the north by a river—dry in the winter. From his earliest years, Wee Willie Winkie had been forbidden to go across the river, and had noted that even Coppy—the almost almighty Coppy—had never set foot beyond it. Wee Willie Winkie had once been read to, out of a big blue book, the history of the princess and the goblins—a most wonderful tale of a land where the goblins were always warring with the children of men until they were defeated by one Curdie. Ever since that date it seemed to him that the bare black and purple hills across the river were inhabited by goblins, and, in truth, every one had said that there lived the bad men. Even in his own house the lower halves of the windows were covered with green paper on account of the bad men who might, if allowed clear view, fire into peaceful drawing-rooms and comfortable bedrooms. Certainly, beyond the river, which was the end of all the earth, lived the bad men. And here was Major Allardyce's big girl,

Coppy's property, preparing to venture into their borders! What would Coppy say if anything happened to her? If the goblins ran off with her as they did with Curdie's princess? She must at all hazards be turned back.

The house was still. Wee Willie Winkie reflected for a moment on the very terrible wrath of his father; and then—broke his arrest! It was a crime unspeakable. The low sun threw his shadow, very large and very black, on the trim garden-paths, as he went down to the stables and ordered his pony. It seemed to him in the hush of the dawn that all the big world had been bidden to stand still and look at Wee Willie Winkie guilty of mutiny. The drowsy groom handed him his mount, and since the one great sin made all others insignificant, Wee Willie Winkie said that he was going to ride over to Coppy Sahib, and went out at a foot-pace, stepping on the soft mould of the flower-borders.

The devastating track of the pony's feet was the last misdeed that cut him off from all sympathy of humanity. He turned into the road, leaned forward, and rode as fast as the pony could put foot to the ground in the direction of the river.

But the liveliest of twelve-two ponies can do little against the long canter of a waler. Miss Allardyce was far ahead, had passed through the crops, beyond the police-post, when all the guards were asleep, and her mount was scattering the pebbles of the river bed as Wee Willie Winkie left the cantonment and British India behind him. Bowed forward and still flogging, Wee Willie Winkie shot into Afghan territory, and could just see Miss Allardyce a black speck, flickering across the stony plain. The reason of her wandering was simple enough. Coppy, in a tone of too hastily assumed authority, had told her overnight that she must not ride out by the river. And she had gone to prove her own spirit and teach Coppy a lesson.

Almost at the foot of the inhospitable hills, Wee Willie Winkie saw the waler blunder and come down heavily. Miss Allardyce struggled clear, but her ankle had been severely twisted, and she could not stand. Having thus demon-

strated her spirit, she wept copiously, and was surprised by the apparition of a white, wide-eyed child in khaki, on a nearly spent pony.

"Are you badly, badly hurted?" shouted Wee Willie Winkie, as soon as he was within range. "You didn't ought to be here."

"I don't know," said Miss Allardyce, ruefully, ignoring the reproof. "Good gracious, child, what are *you* doing here?"

"You said you was going acwoss ve wiver," panted Wee Willie Winkie, throwing himself off his pony. "And nobody —not even Coppy—must go acwoss ve wiver, and I came after you ever so hard, but you wouldn't stop, and now you've hurted yourself, and Coppy will be angwy wiv me, and—I've bwoken my awwest! I've bwoken my awwest!"

The future colonel of the 195th sat down and sobbed. In spite of the pain in her ankle the girl was moved.

"Have you ridden all the way from cantonments, little man? What for?"

"You belonged to Coppy. Coppy told me so!" wailed Wee Willie Winkie, disconsolately. "I saw him kissing you, and he said he was fonder of you van Bell or ve Butcha or me. And so I came. You must get up and come back. You didn't ought to be here. Vis is a bad place, and I've bwoken my awwest."

"I can't move, Winkie," said Miss Allardyce, with a groan. "I've hurt my foot. What shall I do?"

She showed a readiness to weep afresh, which steadied Wee Willie Winkie, who had been brought up to believe that tears were the depth of unmanliness. Still, when one is as great a sinner as Wee Willie Winkie, even a man may be permitted to break down.

"Winkie," said Miss Allardyce, "when you've rested a little, ride back and tell them to send out something, to carry me back in. It hurts fearfully."

The child sat still for a little time and Miss Allardyce closed her eyes; the pain was nearly making her faint. She

was roused by Wee Willie Winkie tying up the reins on his pony's neck and setting it free with a vicious cut of his whip that made it whicker. The little animal headed toward the cantonments.

"Oh, Winkie! What are you doing?"

"Hush!" said Wee Willie Winkie. "Vere's a man coming—one of ve bad men. I must stay wiv you. My faver says a man must *always* look after a girl. Jack will go home, and ven vey'll come and look for us. Vat's why I let him go."

Not one man but two or three had appeared from behind the rocks of the hills, and the heart of Wee Willie Winkie sunk within him, for just in this manner were the goblins wont to steal out and vex Curdie's soul. Thus had they played in Curdie's garden, he had seen the picture, and thus had they frightened the princess's nurse. He heard them talking to each other, and recognized with joy the bastard Pushto that he had picked up from one of his father's grooms lately dismissed. People who spoke that tongue could not be the bad men. They were only natives after all.

They came up to the bowlders on which Miss Allardyce's horse had blundered.

Then rose from the rock Wee Willie Winkle, child of the dominant race, aged six and three-quarters, and said, briefly and emphatically "*Jao!*" The pony had crossed the river-bed.

The men laughed, and laughter from the natives was the one thing Wee Willie Winkie could not tolerate. He asked them what they wanted and why they did not depart. Other men with most evil faces and crooked-stocked guns crept out of the shadows of the hills, till, soon Wee Willie Winkie was face to face with an audience some twenty strong. Miss Allardyce screamed.

"Who are you?" said one of the men.

"I am the Colonel Sahib's son, and my order is that you go at once. You black men are frightening the Miss Sahib. One of you must run into cantonments and take the news

that the Miss Sahib has hurt herself, and that the colonel's son is here with her."

"Put our feet into the trap?" was the laughing reply. "Hear this boy's speech!"

"Say that I sent you—I, the colonel's son. They will give you money."

"What is the use of this talk? Take up the child and the girl, and we can at least ask for the ransom. Ours are the villages on the heights," said a voice in the background.

These *were* the bad men—worse than the goblins—and it needed all Wee Willie Winkie's training to prevent him from bursting into tears. But he felt that to cry before a native, excepting only his mother's *ayah*, would be an infamy greater than any mutiny. Moreover, he, as future colonel of the 195th, had that grim regiment at his back.

"Are you going to carry us away?" said Wee Willie Winkie, very blanched and uncomfortable.

"Yes, my little *Sahib Bahadur*," said the tallest of the men, "and eat you afterward."

"That is child's talk," said Wee Willie Winkie. "Men do not eat men."

A yell of laughter interrupted him, but he went on, firmly: "And if you do carry us away, I tell you that all my regiment will come up in a day and kill you all without leaving one. Who will take my message to the Colonel Sahib?"

Speech in any vernacular—and Wee Willie Winkie had a colloquial acquaintance with three—was easy to the boy who could not yet manage his "r's" and "th's" aright.

Another man joined the conference, crying: "Oh, foolish men! What this babe says is true. He is the heart's heart of those white troops. For the sake of peace let them go both, for if he be taken, the regiment will break loose and gut the valley. *Our* villages are in the valley, and we shall not escape. That regiment are devils. They broke Khoda Yar's breast-bone with kicks when he tried to take the rifles; and if we touch this child they will fire and rape and plunder

for a month, till nothing remains. Better to send a man back to take the message and get a reward. I say that this child is their god, and that they will spare none of us, nor our women, if we harm him."

It was Din Mahommed, the dismissed groom of the colonel, who made the diversion, and an angry and heated discussion followed. Wee Willie Winkie, standing over Miss Allardyce, waited the upshot. Surely his "wegiment," his own "wegiment," would not desert him if they knew of his extremity.

. . . . . .

The riderless pony brought the news to the 195th, though there had been consternation in the colonel's household for an hour before. The little beast came in through the parade-ground in front of the main barracks, where the men were settling down to play spoil-five till the afternoon. Devlin, the color-sergeant of E Company, glanced at the empty saddle and tumbled through the barrack-rooms, kicking up each room corporal as he passed. "Up, ye beggars! There's something happened to the colonel's son," he shouted.

"He couldn't fall off! S'elp me' 'e *couldn't* fall off," blubbered a drummer-boy. "Go an' hunt acrost the river. He's over there if he's anywhere, an' may be those Pathans have got 'im. For the love o' Gawd don't look for 'im in the nullahs! Let's go over the river."

"There's sense in Mott yet," said Devlin. "E Company, double out to the river—sharp!"

So E Company, in its shirt-sleeves mainly, doubled for the dear life, and in the rear toiled the perspiring sergeant, adjuring it to double yet faster. The cantonment was alive with the men of the 195th hunting for Wee Willie Winkie, and the colonel finally overtook E Company, far too exhausted to swear, struggling in the pebbles of the river-bed.

Up the hill under which Wee Willie Winkie's bad men were discussing the wisdom of carrying off the child and the girl, a lookout fired two shots.

"What have I said?" shouted Din Mahommed. "There

is the warning! The *pulton* are out already and are coming across the plain! Get away! Let us not be seen with the boy!"

The men waited for an instant, and then, as another shot was fired, withdrew into the hills, silently as they had appeared.

"The wegiment is coming," said Wee Willie Winkie, confidently to Miss Allardyce, "and it's all wight. Don't cry!"

He needed the advice himself, for ten minutes later, when his father came up, he was weeping bitterly with his head in Miss Allardyce's lap.

And the men of the 195th carried him home with shouts and rejoicings; and Coppy, who had ridden a horse into a lather, met him, and, to his intense disgust, kissed him openly in the presence of the men.

But there was balm for his dignity. His father assured him that not only would the breaking of arrest be condoned, but that the good-conduct badge would be restored as soon as his mother could sew it on his blouse-sleeve. Miss Allardyce had told the colonel a story that made him proud of his son.

"She belonged to you, Coppy," said Wee Willie Winkie, indicating Miss Allardyce with a grimy forefinger. "I *knew* she didn't ought to go acwoss ve wiver, and I knew ve wegiment would come to me if I sent Jack home."

"You're a hero, Winkie," said Coppy—"a *pukka* hero!"

"I don't know what vat means," said Wee Willie Winkie, "but you mustn't call me Winkie any no more. I'm Percival Will'am Will'ams."

And in this manner did Wee Willie Winkie enter into his manhood.

BAA BAA, BLACK SHEEP

Baa Baa, Black Sheep,
Have you any wool?
Yes, Sir, yes, Sir, three bags full.
One for the Master, one for the Dame—
None for the Little Boy that cries down the lane.
—*Nursery Rhyme*

THE FIRST BAG

"When I was in my father's house, I was in a better place"

THEY were putting Punch to bed—the *ayah* and the *hamal* and Meeta, the big *Surti* boy with the red and gold turban. Judy, already tucked inside her mosquito-curtains, was nearly asleep. Punch had been allowed to stay up for dinner. Many privileges had been accorded to Punch within the last ten days, and a greater kindness from the people of his world had encompassed his ways and works, which were mostly obstreperous. He sat on the edge of his bed and swung his bare legs defiantly.

"Punch-*baba* going to bye-lo?" said the *ayah*, suggestively.

"No," said Punch. "Punch-*baba* wants the story about the Ranee that was turned into a tiger. Meeta must tell it, and the *hamal* shall hide behind the door and make tiger-noises at the proper time."

"But Judy-*baba* will wake up," said the *ayah*.

"Judy-*baba* is waking," piped a small voice from the mosquito-curtains. "There was a Ranee that lived at Delhi. Go on, Meeta," and she fell fast asleep again while Meeta began the story.

Never had Punch secured the telling of that tale with so little opposition. He reflected for a long time. The *hamal* made the tiger-noises in twenty different keys.

"'Top!" said Punch, authoritatively. "Why doesn't papa come in and say he is going to give me *put-put?*"

"Punch-*baba* is going away," said the *ayah*. "In another week there will be no Punch-*baba* to pull my hair any more." She sighed softly, for the boy of the household was very dear to her heart.

"Up the Ghauts in a train?" said Punch, standing on his bed. "All the way to Nassick where the Ranee tiger lives?"

"Not to Nassick this year, little sahib," said Meeta, lifting him on his shoulder. "Down to the sea where the cocoanuts are thrown, and across the sea in a big ship. Will you take Meeta with you to *Belait?*"

"You shall all come," said Punch, from the height of Meeta's strong arms. "Meeta and the *ayah* and the *hamal* and Bhini-in-the-garden, and the salaam-captain-sahib-snake-man."

There was no mockery in Meeta's voice when he replied: "Great is the sahib's favor," and laid the little man down in the bed, while the *ayah*, sitting in the moonlight at the doorway, lulled him to sleep with an interminable canticle such as they sing in the Roman Catholic church at Parel. Punch curled himself into a ball and slept.

Next morning Judy shouted that there was a rat in the nursery, and thus he forgot to tell her the wonderful news. It did not much matter, for Judy was only three and she would not have understood. But Punch was five; and he knew that going to England would be much nicer than a trip to Nassick.

. . . . . .

And papa and mamma sold the brougham and the piano, and stripped the house, and curtailed the allowance of crockery for the daily meals, and took long council together over a bundle of letters bearing the Rocklington postmark.

"The worst of it is that one can't be certain of anything," said papa, pulling his mustache. "The letters in themselves are excellent, and the terms are moderate enough."

"The worst of it is that the children will grow up away from me," thought mamma; but she did not say it aloud.

"We are only one case among hundreds," said papa, bitterly. "You shall go home again in five years, dear."

"Punch will be ten then—and Judy eight. Oh, how long and long and long the time will be! And we have to leave them among strangers."

"Punch is a cheery little chap. He's sure to make friends wherever he goes."

"And who could help loving my Ju?"

They were standing over the cots in the nursery late at night, and I think that mamma was crying softly. After papa had gone away, she knelt down by the side of Judy's cot. The *ayah* saw her and put up a prayer that the *mem-sahib* might never find the love of her children taken away from her and given to a stranger.

Mamma's own prayer was a slightly illogical one. Summarized it ran: "Let strangers love my children and be as good to them as I should be, but let *me* preserve their love and their confidence for ever and ever. Amen." Punch scratched himself in his sleep, and Judy moaned a little. That seems to be the only answer to the prayer; and, next day, they all went down to the sea, and there was a scene at the Apollo Bunder when Punch discovered that Meeta could not come too, and Judy learned that the *ayah* must be left behind. But Punch found a thousand fascinating things in the rope, block, and steam-pipe line on the big P. and O. steamer long before Meeta and the *ayah* had dried their tears.

"Come back, Punch-*baba*," said the *ayah*.

"Come back," said Meeta, "and be a *Burra sahib*."

"Yes," said Punch, lifted up in his father's arms to wave good-by. "Yes, I will come back, and I will be a *Burra sahib Baha dur!*"

At the end of the first day Punch demanded to be set down in England, which he was certain must be close at hand. Next day there was a merry breeze, and Punch was

very sick. "When I come back to Bombay," said Punch on his recovery, "I will come by the road—in a broom-*gharri*. This is a very naughty ship."

The Swedish boatswain consoled him, and he modified his opinions as the voyage went on. There was so much to see and to handle and ask questions about that Punch nearly forgot the *ayah* and Meeta and the *hamal*, and with difficulty remembered a few words of the Hindoostanee once his second speech.

But Judy was much worse. The day before the steamer reached Southampton, mamma asked her if she would not like to see the *ayah* again. Judy's blue eyes turned to the stretch of sea that had swallowed all her tiny past, and she said: "*Ayah!* What *ayah?*"

Mamma cried over her and Punch marveled. It was then that he heard for the first time mamma's passionate appeal to him never to let Judy forget mamma. Seeing that Judy was young, ridiculously young, and that mamma, every evening for four weeks past, had come into the cabin to sing her and Punch to sleep with a mysterious rune that he called "Sonny, my soul," Punch could not understand what mamma meant. But he strove to do his duty; for, the moment mamma left the cabin, he said to Judy:

"Ju, you remember mamma?"

" 'Torse I do," said Judy.

"Then *always* remember mamma, else I won't give you the paper ducks that the red-haired Captain Sahib cut out for me."

So Judy promised always to "bemember mamma."

Many and many a time was mamma's command laid upon Punch, and papa would say the same thing with an insistence that awed the child.

"You must make haste and learn to write, Punch," said papa, "and then you'll be able to write letters to us in Bombay."

"I'll come into your room," said Punch, and papa choked.

Papa and mamma were always choking in those days.

If Punch took Judy to task for not "bemembering," they choked. If Punch sprawled on the sofa in the Southampton lodging-house and sketched his future in purple and gold, they choked; and so they did if Judy put up her mouth for a kiss.

Through many days all four were vagabonds on the face of the earth—Punch with no one to give orders to, Judy too young for anything, and papa and mamma grave, distracted, and choking.

"Where," demanded Punch, wearied of a loathsome contrivance on four wheels with a mound of luggage atop—"*where* is our broom-*gharri?* This thing talks so much that *I* can't talk. Where is our *own* broom-*gharri?*" When I was at Bandstand before we comed away, I asked Inverarity Sahib why he was sitting in it, and he said it was his own. And I said, 'I will *give* it you'—I like Inverarity Sahib—and I said, 'Can you put your legs through the pully-wag loops by the windows?' And Inverarity Sahib said No, and laughed. *I* can put my legs through the pully-wag loops. I can put my legs through *these* pully-wag loops. Look! Oh, mamma's crying again! I didn't know. I wasn't not to do *so.*"

Punch drew his legs out of the loops of the four-wheeler; the door opened and he slid to the earth, in a cascade of parcels, at the door of an austere little villa whose gates bore the legend "Downe Lodge." Punch gathered himself together and eyed the house with disfavor. It stood on a sandy road, and a cold wind tickled his knickerbockered legs.

"Let us go away," said Punch. "This is not a pretty place."

But mamma and papa and Judy had quitted the cab, and all the luggage was being taken into the house. At the doorstep stood a woman in black, and she smiled largely, with dry chapped lips. Behind her was a man, big, bony, gray, and lame as to one leg—behind him a boy of twelve, black-haired and oily in appearance. Punch surveyed the trio, and advanced without fear, as he had been accustomed

to do in Bombay when callers came and he happened to be playing in the veranda.

"How do you do?" said he. "I am Punch." But they were all looking at the luggage—all except the gray man, who shook hands with Punch and said he was "a smart little fellow." There was much running about and banging of boxes, and Punch curled himself up on the sofa in the dining-room and considered things.

"I don't like these people," said Punch. "But never mind. We'll go away soon. We have always went away soon from everywhere. I wish we was gone back to Bombay *soon.*"

The wish bore no fruit. For six days mamma wept at intervals, and showed the woman in black all Punch's clothes —a liberty which Punch resented. "But p'r'aps she's a new white *ayah*," he thought. "I'm to call her Antirosa, but she doesn't call *me* sahib. She says just Punch," he confided to Judy. "What is Antirosa?"

Judy didn't know. Neither she nor Punch had heard anything of an animal called an aunt. Their world had been papa and mamma, who knew everything, permitted everything, and loved everybody—even Punch when he used to go into the garden at Bombay and fill his nails with mould after the weekly nail-cutting, because, as he explained between two strokes of the slipper to his sorely tried father, his fingers "felt so new at the ends."

In an undefined way Punch judged it advisable to keep both parents between himself and the woman in black and the boy in black hair. He did not approve of them. He liked the gray man, who had expressed a wish to be called "Uncleharri." They nodded at each other when they met, and the gray man showed him a little ship with rigging that took up and down.

"She is a model of the 'Brisk'—the little 'Brisk' that was sore exposed that day at Navarino." The gray man hummed the last words and fell into a reverie. "I'll tell you about Navarino, Punch, when we go for walks to-

gether; and you mustn't touch the ship, because she's the 'Brisk.' "

Long before that walk, the first of many, was taken, they roused Punch and Judy in the chill dawn of a February morning to say good-by; and of all people in the wide earth to papa and mamma—both crying this time. Punch was very sleepy and Judy was cross.

"Don't forget us," pleaded mamma. "Oh, my little son, don't forget us, and see that Judy remembers us too."

"I've told Judy to bemember," said Punch, wriggling, for his father's beard tickled his neck. "I've told Judy—ten—forty—'leven thousand times. But Ju's so young—quite a baby—isn't she?"

"Yes," said papa, "quite a baby, and you must be good to Judy, and make haste to learn to write and—and—and . . ."

Punch was back in his bed again. Judy was fast asleep, and there was the rattle of a cab below. Papa and mamma had gone away. Not to Nassick; that was across the sea. To some place much nearer, of course, and equally of course they would return. They came back after dinner-parties, and papa had come back after he had been to a place called "The Snows," and mamma with him, to Punch and Judy at Mrs. Inverarity's house in Marine Lines. Assuredly they would come back again. So Punch fell asleep till the true morning, when the black-haired boy met him with the information that papa and mamma had gone to Bombay, and that he and Judy were to stay at Downe Lodge "forever." Antirosa, tearfully appealed to for a contradiction, said that Harry had spoken the truth, and that it behooved Punch to fold up his clothes neatly on going to bed. Punch went out and wept bitterly with Judy, into whose fair head he had driven some ideas of the meaning of separation.

When a matured man discovers that he has been deserted by Providence, deprived of his God, and cast, without help, comfort, or sympathy, upon a world which is new and strange to him, his despair, which may find expression in evil-living,

the writing of his experiences, or the more satisfactory diversion of suicide, is generally supposed to be impressive. A child, under exactly similar circumstances as far as its knowledge goes, cannot very well curse God and die. It howls till its nose is red, its eyes are sore, and its head aches. Punch and Judy, through no fault of their own, had lost all their world. They sat in the hall and cried; the black-haired boy looking on from afar.

The model of the ship availed nothing, though the gray man assured Punch that he might pull the rigging up and down as much as he pleased; and Judy was promised free entry into the kitchen. They wanted papa and mamma gone to Bombay beyond the seas, and their grief while it lasted was without remedy.

When the tears ceased the house was very still. Antirosa had decided it was better to let the children "have their cry out," and the boy had gone to school. Punch raised his head from the floor and sniffled mournfully. Judy was nearly asleep. Three short years had not taught her how to bear sorrow with full knowledge. There was a distant, dull boom in the air—a repeated heavy thud. Punch knew that sound in Bombay in the monsoon. It was the sea—the sea that must be traversed before any one could get to Bombay.

"Quick, Ju!" he cried, "we're close to the sea. I can hear it! Listen! That's where they've went. P'r'aps we can catch them if we was in time. They didn't mean to go without us. They've only forgot."

"Iss," said Judy. "They've only forgotted. Less go to the sea."

The hall door was open and so was the garden gate.

"It's very, very big, this place," he said, looking cautiously down the road, "and we will get lost; but I will find a man and order him to take me back to my house—like I did in Bombay."

He took Judy by the hand, and the two fled hatless in the direction of the sound of the sea. Downe Villa was al-

most the last of a range of newly built houses running out, through a chaos of brick-mounds, to a heath where gypsies occasionally camped and where the Garrison Artillery of Rocklington practiced. There were few people to be seen, and the children might have been taken for those of the soldiery who ranged far. Half an hour the wearied little legs tramped across heath, potato-field, and sand-dune.

"I'se so tired," said Judy, "and mamma will be angry."

"Mamma's *never* angry. I suppose she is waiting at the sea now while papa gets tickets. We'll find them and go along with. Ju, you mustn't sit down. Only a little more and we'll come to the sea. Ju, if you sit down I'll *thmack* you!" said Punch.

They climbed another dune, and came upon the great gray sea at low tide. Hundreds of crabs were scuttling about the beach, but there was no trace of papa and mamma, not even of a ship upon the waters—nothing but sand and mud for miles and miles.

And "Uncleharri" found them by chance—very muddy and very forlorn—Punch dissolved in tears, but trying to divert Judy with an "ickle trab," and Judy wailing to the pitiless horizon for "mammà, mamma!" and again "mamma!"

THE SECOND BAG

> Ah, well-a-day, for we are souls bereaved!
> Of all the creatures under heaven's wide scope
> We are most hopeless, who had once most hope,
> And most beliefless, who had most believed.
>
> —*The City of Dreadful Night*

ALL this time not a word about Black Sheep. He came later, and Harry the black-haired boy was mainly responsible for his coming.

Judy—who could help loving little Judy?—passed, by special permit, into the kitchen and thence straight to Aunty Rosa's heart. Harry was Aunty Rosa's one child, and

Punch was the extra boy about the house. There was no special place for him or his little affairs, and he was forbidden to sprawl on sofas and explain his ideas about the manufacture of this world and his hopes for his future. Sprawling was lazy and wore out sofas, and little boys were not expected to talk. They were talked to, and the talking to was intended for the benefit of their morals. As the unquestioned despot of the house at Bombay, Punch could not quite understand how he came to be of no account in this his new life.

Harry might reach across the table and take what he wanted; Judy might point and get what she wanted. Punch was forbidden to do either. The gray man was his great hope and stand-by for many months after mamma and papa left, and he had forgotten to tell Judy to "bemember mamma."

This lapse was excusable, because in the interval he had been introduced by Aunty Rosa to two very impressive things—an abstraction called God, the intimate friend and ally of Aunty Rosa, generally believed to live behind the kitchen-range because it was hot there—and a dirty brown book filled with unintelligible dots and marks. Punch was always anxious to oblige everybody. He, therefore, welded the story of the Creation on to what he could recollect of his Indian fairy tales, and scandalized Aunty Rosa by repeating the result to Judy. It was a sin, a grievous sin, and Punch was talked to for a quarter of an hour. He could not understand where the iniquity came in, but was careful not to repeat the offense, because Aunty Rosa told him that God had heard every word he had said and was very angry. If this were true why didn't God come and say so, thought Punch, and dismissed the matter from his mind. Afterward he learned to know the Lord as the only thing in the world more awful than Aunty Rosa—as a creature that stood in the background and counted the strokes of the cane.

But the reading was, just then, a much more serious matter than any creed. Aunty Rosa sat him upon a table and told him that A B meant ab.

"Why?" said Punch. "A is a and B is bee. *Why* does A B mean ab?"

"Because I tell you it does," said Aunty Rosa, "and you've got to say it."

Punch said it accordingly, and for a month, hugely against his will, stumbled through the brown book, not in the least comprehending what it meant. But Uncle Harry, who walked much and generally alone, was wont to come into the nursery and suggest to Aunty Rosa that Punch should walk with him. He seldom spoke, but he showed Punch all Rocklington, from the mud-banks and the sand of the back-bay to the great harbors where ships lay at anchor, and the dockyards where the hammers were never still, and the marine-store shops, and the shiny brass counters in the offices where Uncle Harry went once every three months with a slip of blue paper and received sovereigns in exchange; for he held a wound-pension. Punch heard, too, from his lips the story of the battle of Navarino, where the sailors of the fleet, for three days afterward, were deaf as posts and could only sign to each other. "That was because of the noise of the guns," said Uncle Harry, "and I have got the wadding of a bullet somewhere inside me now."

Punch regarded him with curiosity. He had not the least idea what wadding was, and his notion of a bullet was a dockyard cannon-ball bigger than his own head. How could Uncle Harry keep a cannon-ball inside him? He was ashamed to ask, for fear Uncle Harry might be angry.

Punch had never known what anger—real anger—meant until one terrible day when Harry had taken his paint-box to paint a boat with, and Punch had protested with a loud and lamentable voice. Then Uncle Harry had appeared on the scene and, muttering something about "strangers' children," had with a stick smitten the black-haired boy across the shoulders till he wept and yelled, and Aunty Rosa came in and abused Uncle Harry for cruelty to his own flesh and blood, and Punch shuddered to the tips of his shoes. "It wasn't my fault," he explained to the boy, but both Harry

and Aunty Rosa said that it was, and that Punch had told tales, and for a week there were no more walks with Uncle Harry.

But that week brought a great joy to Punch.

He had repeated till he was thrice weary the statement that "the cat lay on the mat and the rat came in."

"Now I can truly read," said Punch, "and now I will never read anything in the world."

He put the brown book in the cupboard where his school-books lived and accidentally tumbled out a venerable volume, without covers, labeled "Sharpe's Magazine." There was the most portentous picture of a griffin on the first page, with verses below. The griffin carried off one sheep a day from a German village, till a man came with a "falchion" and split the griffin open. Goodness only knew what a falchion was, but there was the griffin, and his history was an improvement upon the eternal cat.

"This," said Punch, "means things, and now I will know all about everything in all the world." He read till the light failed, not understanding a tithe of the meaning, but tantalized by glimpses of new worlds hereafter to be revealed.

"What is a 'falchion'? What is a 'wee lamb'? What is a 'base *uss*urper'? What is a 'verdant me-ad'?" he demanded, with flushed cheeks, at bedtime, of the astonished Aunt Rosa.

"Say your prayers and go to sleep," she replied, and that was all the help Punch then or afterward found at her hands in the new and delightful exercise of reading.

"Aunt Rosa only knows about God and things like that," argued Punch. "Uncle Harry will tell me."

The next walk proved that Uncle Harry could not help either; but he allowed Punch to talk, and even sat down on a bench to hear about the griffin. Other walks brought other stories as Punch ranged further afield, for the house held large store of old books that no one ever opened—from "Frank Fairlegh" in serial numbers, and the earlier poems of Tennyson, contributed anonymously to "Sharpe's Magazine,"

to '62 Exhibition Catalogues, gay with colors and delightfully incomprehensible, and odd leaves of "Gulliver's Travels."

As soon as Punch could string a few pot-hooks together, he wrote to Bombay, demanding by return of post "all the books in all the world." Papa could not comply with this modest indent, but sent "Grimm's Fairy Tales" and a "Hans Andersen." That was enough. If he were only left alone Punch could pass, at any hour he chose, into a land of his own, beyond reach of Aunty Rosa and her God, Harry and his teasements, and Judy's claims to be played with.

"Don't disturve me, I'm reading. Go and play in the kitchen," grunted Punch. "Aunty Rosa lets *you* go there." Judy was cutting her second teeth and was fretful. She appealed to Aunty Rosa, who descended on Punch.

"I was reading," he explained, "reading a book. I *want* to read."

"You're only doing that to show off," said Aunty Rosa. "But we'll see. Play with Judy now, and don't open a book for a week."

Judy did not pass a very enjoyable play-time with Punch, who was consumed with indignation. There was a pettiness at the bottom of the prohibition which puzzled him.

"It's what I like to do," he said, "and she's found out that and stopped me. Don't cry, Ju—it wasn't your fault—*please* don't cry, or she'll say I made you."

Ju loyally mopped up her tears, and the two played in their nursery, a room in the basement and half underground, to which they were regularly sent after the midday dinner while Aunty Rosa slept. She drank wine—that is to say, something from a bottle in the cellaret—for her stomach's sake, but if she did not fall asleep she would sometimes come into the nursery to see that the children were really playing. Now, bricks, wooden hoops, ninepins, and chinaware cannot amuse forever, especially when all fairyland is to be won by the mere opening of a book, and, as often as not, Punch would be discovered reading to Judy or telling her inter-

minable tales. That was an offense in the eyes of the law, and Judy would be whisked off by Aunty Rosa, while Punch was left to play alone, "and be sure that I hear you doing it."

It was not a cheering employ, for he had to make a playful noise. At last, with infinite craft, he devised an arrangement whereby the table could be supported as to three legs on toy bricks, leaving the fourth clear to bring down on the floor. He could work the table with one hand and hold a book with the other. This he did till an evil day when Aunty Rosa pounced upon him unawares and told him that he was "acting a lie."

"If you're old enough to do that," she said—her temper was always worst after dinner—"you're old enough to be beaten."

"But—I'm—I'm not a animal!" said Punch aghast. He remembered Uncle Harry and the stick, and turned white. Aunty Rosa had hidden a light cane behind her, and Punch was beaten then and there over the shoulders. It was a revelation to him. The room-door was shut, and he was left to weep himself into repentance and work out his own gospel of life.

Aunty Rosa, he argued, had the power to beat him with many stripes. It was unjust and cruel, and mamma and papa would never have allowed it. Unless perhaps, as Aunty Rosa seemed to imply, they had sent secret orders. In which case he was abandoned indeed. It would be discreet in the future to propitiate Aunty Rosa, but, then, again, even in matters in which he was innocent, he had been accused of wishing to "show off." He had "shown off" before visitors when he had attacked a strange gentleman—Harry's uncle, not his own—with requests for information about the griffin and the falchion, and the precise nature of the tilbury in which Frank Fairlegh rode—all points of paramount interest which he was bursting to understand. Clearly it would not do to pretend to care for Aunty Rosa.

At this point Harry entered and stood afar off, eying Punch, a disheveled heap in the corner of the room, with disgust.

"You're a liar—a young liar," said Harry, with great unction, "and you're to have tea down here because you're not fit to speak to us. And you're not to speak to Judy again till mother gives you leave. You'll corrupt her. You're only fit to associate with the servant. Mother says so."

Having reduced Punch to a second agony of tears, Harry departed upstairs with the news that Punch was still rebellious.

Uncle Harry sat uneasily in the dining-room. "Damn it all, Rosa," said he at last, "can't you leave the child alone? He's a good enough little chap when I meet him."

"He puts on his best manners with you, Henry," said Aunty Rosa, "but I'm afraid, I'm very much afraid, that he is the black sheep of the family."

Harry heard and stored up the name for future use. Judy cried till she was bidden to stop, her brother not being worth tears; and the evening concluded with the return of Punch to the upper regions and a private sitting at which all the blinding horrors of hell were revealed to Punch with such store of imagery as Aunty Rosa's narrow mind possessed.

Most grievous of all was Judy's round-eyed reproach, and Punch went to bed in the depths of the Valley of Humiliation. He shared his room with Harry and knew the torture in store. For an hour and a half he had to answer that young gentleman's question as to his motives for telling a lie, and a grievous lie, the precise quantity of punishment inflicted by Aunty Rosa, and had also to profess his deep gratitude for such religious instruction as Harry thought fit to impart.

From that day began the downfall of Punch, now Black Sheep.

"Untrustworthy in one thing, untrustworthy in all," said Aunty Rosa, and Harry felt that Black Sheep was delivered into his hands. He would wake him up in the night to ask him why he was such a liar.

"I don't know," Punch would reply.

"Then don't you think you ought to get up and pray to God for a new heart?"

"Y-yess."

"Get out and pray, then!" And Punch would get out of bed with raging hate in his heart against all the world, seen and unseen. He was always tumbling into trouble. Harry had a knack of cross-examining him as to his day's doings, which seldom failed to lead him, sleepy and savage, into half a dozen contradictions—all duly reported to Aunty Rosa next morning.

"But it *wasn't* a lie," Punch would begin, charging into a labored explanation that landed him more hopelessly in the mire. "I said that I didn't say my prayers *twice* over in the day, and *that* was on Tuesday. *Once* I did. I *know* I did, but Harry said I didn't," and so forth, till the tension brought tears, and he was dismissed from the table in disgrace.

"You usen't to be as bad as this?" said Judy, awestricken at the catalogue of Black Sheep's crimes. "Why are you so bad now?"

"I don't know," Black Sheep would reply. "I'm not, if I only wasn't bothered upside down. I knew what I *did*, and I want to say so; but Harry always makes it out different somehow, and Aunty Rosa doesn't believe a word I say. Oh, Ju! don't you say I'm bad too."

"Aunty Rosa says you are," said Judy. "She told the vicar so when he came yesterday."

"Why does she tell all the people outside the house about me? It isn't fair," said Black Sheep. "When I was in Bombay, and was bad—*doing* bad, not made-up bad like this—mamma told papa, and papa told me he knew, and that was all. *Outside* people didn't know too—even Meeta didn't know."

"I don't remember," said Judy, wistfully. "I was all little then. Mamma was just as fond of you as she was of me, wasn't she?"

"'Course she was. So was papa. So was everybody."

"Aunty Rosa likes me more than she does you. She says that you are a trial and a black sheep, and I'm not to speak to you more than I can help."

"Always? Not outside of the times when you mustn't speak to me at all?"

Judy nodded her head mournfully. Black Sheep turned away in despair, but Judy's arms were round his neck.

"Never mind, Punch," she whispered. "I *will* speak to you just the same as ever and ever. You're my own own brother though you are—though Aunty Rosa says you're bad, and Harry says you're a little coward. He says that if I pulled your hair hard, you'd cry."

"Pull, then," said Punch.

Judy pulled gingerly.

"Pull harder—as hard as you can! There! I don't mind how much you pull it *now*. If you'll speak to me the same as ever I'll let you pull it as much as you like—pull it out if you like. But I know if Harry came and stood by and made you do it I'd cry."

So the two children sealed the compact with a kiss, and Black Sheep's heart was cheered within him, and by extreme caution and careful avoidance of Harry he acquired virtue, and was allowed to read undisturbed for a week. Uncle Harry took him for walks and consoled him with rough tenderness, never calling him Black Sheep. "It's good for you, I suppose, Punch," he used to say. "Let us sit down. I'm getting tired." His steps led him now not to the beach, but to the cemetery of Rocklington, amid the potato-fields. For hours the gray man would sit on a tombstone, while Black Sheep read epitaphs, and then with a sigh would stump home again.

"I shall lie there soon," said he to Black Sheep, one winter evening, when his face showed white as a worn silver coin under the lights of the chapel lodge. "You needn't tell Aunty Rosa."

A month later, he turned sharp round, ere half a morning walk was completed, and stumped back to the house.

"Put me to bed, Rosa," he muttered. "I've walked my last. The wadding has found me out."

They put him to bed, and for a fortnight the shadow of his sickness lay upon the house, and Black Sheep went to and fro unobserved. Papa had sent him some new books, and he was told to keep quiet. He retired into his own world, and was perfectly happy. Even at night his felicity was unbroken. He could lie in bed and string himself tales of travel and adventure while Harry was downstairs.

"Uncle Harry's going to die," said Judy, who now lived almost entirely with Aunty Rosa.

"I'm very sorry," said Black Sheep, soberly. "He told me that a long time ago."

Aunty Rosa heard the conversation. "Will nothing check your wicked tongue?" she said, angrily. There were blue circles round her eyes.

Black Sheep retreated to the nursery and read "Cometh up as a Flower" with deep and uncomprehending interest. He had been forbidden to read it on account of its "sinfulness," but the bonds of the universe were crumbling, and Aunty Rosa was in great grief.

"I'm glad," said Black Sheep. "She's unhappy now. It wasn't a lie, though. *I* knew. He told me not to tell."

That night Black Sheep woke with a start. Harry was not in the room, and there was a sound of sobbing on the next floor. Then the voice of Uncle Harry, singing the song of the battle of Navarino, cut through the darkness:

> " 'Our vanship was the "Asia"—
> The "Albion" and "Genoa"!' "

"He's getting well," thought Black Sheep, who knew the song through all its seventeen verses. But the blood froze at his little heart as he thought. The voice leaped an octave and rang shrill as a boatswain's pipe:

> " 'And next came on the lovely "Rose,"
> The "Philomel," her fire-ship, closed,
> And the little "Brisk" was sore exposed
> That day at Navarino.' "

"That day at Navarino, Uncle Harry!" shouted Black Sheep, half wild with excitement and fear of he knew not what.

A door opened and Aunty Rosa screamed up the staircase: "Hush! For God's sake hush, you little devil! Uncle Harry is *dead!*"

THE THIRD BAG

"Journeys end in lovers' meeting,
Every wise man's son doth know"

"I WONDER what will happen to me now," thought Black Sheep, when the semi-pagan rites peculiar to the burial of the dead in middle-class houses had been accomplished, and Aunty Rosa, awful in black crape, had returned to this life. "I don't think I've done anything bad that she knows of. I suppose I will soon. She will be very cross after Uncle Harry's dying, and Harry will be cross too. I'll keep in the nursery."

Unfortunately for Punch's plans, it was decided that he should be sent to a day-school which Harry attended. This meant a morning walk with Harry, and perhaps an evening one; but the prospect of freedom in the interval was refreshing. "Harry'll tell everything I do, but I won't do anything," said Black Sheep. Fortified with this virtuous resolution, he went to school only to find that Harry's version of his character had preceded him, and that life was a burden in consequence. He took stock of his associates. Some of them were unclean, some of them talked in dialect, many dropped their h's, and there were two Jews and a negro, or some one quite as dark, in the assembly. "That's a *hubshi*," said Black Sheep to himself. "Even Meeta used to laugh at a *hubshi*. I don't think this is a proper place." He was indignant for at least an hour, till he reflected that any expostulation on his part would be by Aunty Rosa construed into "showing off," and that Harry would tell the boys.

"How do you like school?" said Aunty Rosa at the end of the day.

"I think it is a very nice place," said Punch, quietly.

"I suppose you warned the boys of Black Sheep's character?" said Aunty Rosa to Harry.

"Oh, yes," said the censor of Black Sheep's morals. "They all know about him."

"If I was with my father," said Black Sheep, stung to the quick, "I shouldn't *speak* to those boys. He wouldn't let me. They live in shops. I saw them go into shops—where their fathers live and sell things."

"You're too good for that school, are you?" said Aunty Rosa, with a bitter smile. "You ought to be grateful, Black Sheep, that those boys speak to you at all. It isn't every school that takes little liars."

Harry did not fail to make much capital out of Black Sheep's ill-considered remark; with the result that several boys, including the *hubshi*, demonstrated to Black Sheep the eternal equality of the human race by smacking his head, and his consolation from Aunty Rosa was that it "served him right for being vain." He learned, however, to keep his opinions to himself, and by propitiating Harry in carrying books and the like to secure a little peace. His existence was not too joyful. From nine till twelve he was at school, and from two to four, except on Saturdays. In the evenings he was sent down into the nursery to prepare his lessons for the next day, and every night came the dreaded cross-questionings at Harry's hand. Of Judy he saw but little. She was deeply religious—at six years of age religion is easy to come by—and sorely divided between her natural love for Black Sheep and her love for Aunty Rosa, who could do wrong.

The lean woman returned that love with interest, and Judy, when she dared, took advantage of this for the remission of Black Sheep's penalties. Failures in lessons at school were punished at home by a week without reading other than school-books, and Harry brought the news of such a

failure with glee. Further, Black Sheep was then bound to repeat his lessons at bedtime to Harry, who generally succeeded in making him break down, and consoled him by gloomiest forebodings for the morrow. Harry was at once spy, practical joker, inquisitor, and Aunty Rosa's deputy executioner. He filled his many posts to admiration. From his actions, now that Uncle Harry was dead, there was no appeal. Black Sheep had not been permitted to keep any self-respect at school; at home he was of course utterly discredited, and grateful for any pity that the servant-girls—they changed frequently at Downe Lodge because they, too, were liars—might show. "You're just fit to row in the same boat with Black Sheep," was a sentiment that each new Jane or Eliza might expect to hear, before a month was over, from Aunty Rosa's lips; and Black Sheep was used to ask new girls whether they had yet been compared to him. Harry was "Master Harry" in their mouths; Judy was officially "Miss Judy"; but Black Sheep was never anything more than Black Sheep *tout court.*

As time went on and the memory of papa and mamma became wholly overlaid by the unpleasant task of writing them letters, under Aunty Rosa's eye, each Sunday, Black Sheep forgot what manner of life he had led in the beginning of things. Even Judy's appeals to "try and remember about Bombay" failed to quicken him.

"I can't remember," he said. "I know I used to give orders and mamma kissed me."

"Aunty Rosa will kiss you if you are good," pleaded Judy.

"Ugh! I don't want to be kissed by Aunty Rosa. She'd say I was doing it to get something more to eat."

The weeks lengthened into months, and the holidays came; but just before the holidays Black Sheep fell into deadly sin.

Among the many boys whom Harry had incited to "punch Black Sheep's head because he daren't hit back," was one more aggravating than the rest, who, in an unlucky mo-

ment, fell upon Black Sheep when Harry was not near. The blows stung, and Black Sheep struck back at random with all the power at his command. The boy dropped and whimpered. Black Sheep was astounded at his own act, but, feeling the unresisting body under him, shook it with both his hands in blind fury and then began to throttle his enemy, meaning honestly to slay him. There was a scuffle, and Black Sheep was torn off the body by Harry and some colleagues, and cuffed home tingling but exultant. Aunty Rosa was out; pending her arrival, Harry set himself to lecture Black Sheep on the sin of murder—which he described as the offense of Cain.

"Why didn't you fight him fair? What did you hit him when he was down for, you little cur?"

Black Sheep looked up at Harry's throat and then at a knife on the dinner-table.

"I don't understand," he said wearily. "You always set him on me and told me I was a coward when I blubbed. Will you leave me alone until Aunty Rosa comes in? She'll beat me if you tell her I ought to be beaten; so it's all right."

"It's all wrong," said Harry, magisterially. "You nearly killed him, and I shouldn't wonder if he dies."

"Will he die?" said Black Sheep.

"I daresay," said Harry, "and then you'll be hanged."

"All right," said Black Sheep, possessing himself of the table-knife. "Then I'll kill you now. You say things and do things and . . . and *I* don't know how things happen, and you never leave me alone—and I don't care *what* happens!"

He ran at the boy with the knife, and Harry fled upstairs to his room, promising Black Sheep the finest thrashing in the world when Aunty Rosa returned. Black Sheep sat at the bottom of the stairs, the table-knife in his hand, and wept for that he had not killed Harry. The servant-girl came up from the kitchen, took the knife away, and consoled him. But Black Sheep was beyond consolation. He would be badly beaten by Aunty Rosa; then there would be an-

other beating at Harry's hands; then Judy would not be allowed to speak to him; then the tale would be told at school and then . . .

There was no one to help and no one to care, and the best way out of the business was by death. A knife would hurt, but Aunty Rosa had told him, a year ago, that if he sucked paint he would die. He went into the nursery, unearthed the now disused Noah's Ark, and sucked the paint off as many animals as remained. It tasted abominable, but he had licked Noah's dove clean by the time Aunty Rosa and Judy returned. He went upstairs and greeted them with: "Please, Aunty Rosa, I believe I've nearly killed a boy at school, and I've tried to kill Harry, and when you've done all about God and hell, will you beat me and get it over?"

The tale of the assault as told by Harry could only be explained on the ground of possession by the devil. Wherefore Black Sheep was not only most excellently beaten, once by Aunty Rosa and once, when thoroughly cowed down, by Harry, but he was further prayed for at family prayers, together with Jane, who had stolen a cold rissole from the pantry and snuffled audibly as her enormity was brought before the Throne of Grace. Black Sheep was sore and stiff but triumphant. He would die that very night and be rid of them all. No, he would ask for no forgiveness from Harry, and at bedtime would stand no questioning at Harry's hands, even though addressed as "Young Cain."

"I've been beaten," said he, "and I've done other things. I don't care what I do. If you speak to me to-night, Harry, I'll get out and try to kill you. Now, you can kill me if you like."

Harry took his bed into the spare room, and Black Sheep lay down to die.

It may be that the makers of Noah's arks know that their animals are likely to find their way into young mouths, and paint them accordingly. Certain it is that the common, weary next morning broke through the windows and found Black Sheep quite well and a good deal ashamed of himself,

but richer by the knowledge that he could, in extremity, secure himself against Harry for the future.

When he descended to breakfast on the first day of the holidays, he was greeted with the news that Harry, Aunty Rosa, and Judy were going away to Brighton, while Black Sheep was to stay in the house with the servant. His latest outbreak suited Aunty Rosa's plans admirably. It gave her good excuse for leaving the extra boy behind. Papa in Bombay, who really seemed to know a young sinner's wants to the hour, sent, that week, a package of new books. And with these, and the society of Jane on board-wages, Black Sheep was left alone for a month.

The books lasted for ten days. They were eaten too quickly, in long gulps of four-and-twenty hours at a time. Then came days of doing absolutely nothing, of dreaming dreams and marching imaginary armies up and down stairs, of counting the number of banisters, and of measuring the length and breadth of every room in hand-spans—fifty down the side, thirty across, and fifty back again. Jane made many friends, and, after receiving Black Sheep's assurance that he would not tell of her absences, went out daily for long hours. Black Sheep would follow the rays of the sinking sun from the kitchen to the dining-room and thence upward to his own bedroom until all was gray dark, and he ran down to the kitchen fire and read by its light. He was happy in that he was left alone and could read as much as he pleased. But, later, he grew afraid of the shadows of window-curtains and the flapping of doors and the creaking of shutters. He went out into the garden, and the rustling of the laurel bushes frightened him.

He was glad when they all returned—Aunty Rosa, Harry, and Judy—full of news, and Judy laden with gifts. Who could help loving loyal little Judy? In return for all her merry babblement, Black Sheep confided to her that the distance from the hall door to the top of the first landing was exactly one hundred and eighty-four hand-spans. He had found it out himself.

Then the old life recommenced; but with a difference, and a new sin. To his other iniquities Black Sheep had now added a phenomenal clumsiness—was as unfit to trust in action as he was in word. He himself could not account for spilling everything he touched, upsetting glasses as he put his hand out, and bumping his head against doors that were manifestly shut. There was a gray haze upon all his world, and it narrowed month by month, until at last it left Black Sheep almost alone with the flapping curtains that were so like ghosts, and the nameless terrors of broad daylight that were only coats on pegs, after all.

Holidays came and holidays went, and Black Sheep was taken to see many people whose faces were all exactly alike; was beaten when occasion demanded, and tortured by Harry on all possible occasions; but defended by Judy through good and evil report, though she hereby drew upon herself the wrath of Aunty Rosa.

The weeks were interminable and papa and mamma were clean forgotten. Harry had left school and was a clerk in a banking-office. Freed from his presence, Black Sheep resolved that he should no longer be deprived of his allowance of pleasure-reading. Consequently when he failed at school he reported that all was well, and conceived a large contempt for Aunty Rosa, as he saw how easy it was to deceive her. "She says I'm a little liar when I don't tell lies, and now I do, she doesn't know," thought Black Sheep. Aunty Rosa had credited him in the past with petty cunning and stratagem that had never entered into his head. By the light of the sordid knowledge that she had revealed to him he paid her back full tale. In a household where the most innocent of his motives, his natural yearning for a little affection, had been interpreted into a desire for more bread and jam or to ingratiate himself with strangers and so put Harry into the background, his work was easy. Aunty Rosa could penetrate certain kinds of hypocrisy, but not all. He set his child's wits against hers and was no more beaten. It grew monthly more and more of a trouble to read the school-books,

and even the pages of the open-print story-books danced and were dim. So Black Sheep brooded in the shadows that fell about him and cut him off from the world, inventing horrible punishments for "dear Harry," or plotting another line of the tangled web of deception that he wrapped round Aunty Rosa. Then the crash came and the cobwebs were broken. It was impossible to foresee everything. Aunty Rosa made personal inquiries as to Black Sheep's progress and received information that startled her. Step by step, with a delight as keen as when she convicted an underfed housemaid of the theft of cold meats, she followed the trail of Black Sheep's delinquencies. For weeks and weeks, in order to escape banishment from the book-shelves, he had made a fool of Aunty Rosa, of Harry, of God, of all the world! Horrible, most horrible, and evidence of an utterly depraved mind.

Black Sheep counted the cost. "It will only be one big beating and then she'll put a card with 'Liar' on my back, same as she did before. Harry will whack me at prayers and tell me I'm a child of the devil and give me hymns to learn. But I've done all my reading and she never knew. She'll say she knew all along. She's an old liar, too," said he.

For three days Black Sheep was shut in his own bedroom —to prepare his heart. "That means two beatings. One at school and one here. *That* one will hurt most." And it fell even as he thought. He was thrashed at school before the Jews and the *hubshi*, for the heinous crime of bringing home false reports of progress. He was thrashed at home by Aunty Rosa on the same count, and then the placard was produced. Aunty Rosa stitched it between his shoulders and bade him go for a walk with it upon him.

"If you make me do that," said Black Sheep very quietly, "I shall burn this house down, and perhaps I'll kill you. I don't know whether I *can* kill you—you're so bony—but I'll try."

No punishment followed this blasphemy, though Black Sheep held himself ready to work his way to Aunty Rosa's

withered throat, and grip there till he was beaten off. Perhaps Aunty Rosa was afraid, for Black Sheep, having reached the Nadir of Sin, bore himself with a new recklessness.

In the midst of all the trouble there came a visitor from over the seas to Downe Lodge, who knew papa and mamma, and was commissioned to see Punch and Judy. Black Sheep was sent to the drawing-room and charged into a solid tea-table laden with china.

"Gently, gently, little man," said the visitor, turning Black Sheep's face to the light slowly. "What's that big bird on the palings?"

"What bird?" asked Black Sheep.

The visitor looked deep down into Black Sheep's eyes for half a minute, and then said, suddenly: "Good God, the little chap's nearly blind!"

It was a most business-like visitor. He gave orders, on his own responsibility, that Black Sheep was not to go to school or open a book until mamma came home. "She'll be here in three weeks, as you know of course," said he, "and I'm Inverarity Sahib. I ushered you into this wicked world, young man, and a nice use you seem to have made of your time. You must do nothing whatever. Can you do that?"

"Yes," said Punch, in a dazed way. He had known that mamma was coming. There was a chance, then, of another beating. Thank Heaven, papa wasn't coming too. Aunty Rosa had said of late that he ought to be beaten by a man.

For the next three weeks Black Sheep was strictly allowed to do nothing. He spent his time in the old nursery looking at the broken toys, for all of which account must be rendered to mamma. Aunty Rosa hit him over the hands if even a wooden boat were broken. But that sin was of small importance compared to the other revelations, so darkly hinted at by Aunty Rosa. "When your mother comes, and hears what I have to tell her, she may appreciate you properly," she said, grimly, and mounted guard over Judy lest that small maiden should attempt to comfort her brother, to the peril of her own soul.

And mamma came—in a four-wheeler and a flutter of tender excitement. Such a mamma! She was young, frivolously young, and beautiful, with delicately flushed cheeks, eyes that shone like stars, and a voice that needed no additional appeal of outstretched arms to draw little ones to her heart. Judy ran straight to her, but Black Sheep hesitated. Could this wonder be "showing off"? She would not put out her arms when she knew of his crimes. Meantime was it possible that by fondling she wanted to get anything out of Black Sheep? Only all his love and all his confidence; but that Black Sheep did not know. Aunty Rosa withdrew and left mamma, kneeling between her children, half laughing, half crying, in the very hall where Punch and Judy had wept five years before.

"Well, chicks, do you remember me?"

"No," said Judy, frankly, "but I said 'God bless papa and mamma,' ev'vy night."

"A little," said Black Sheep. "Remember I wrote to you every week, anyhow. That isn't to show off, but 'cause of what comes afterward."

"What comes after! What should come after, my darling boy?" And she drew him to her again. He came awkwardly, with many angles. "Not used to petting," said the quick mother-soul. "The girl is."

"She's too little to hurt any one," thought Black Sheep, "and if I said I'd kill her, she'd be afraid. I wonder what Aunty Rosa will tell."

There was a constrained late dinner, at the end of which mamma picked up Judy and put her to bed with endearments manifold. Faithless little Judy had shown her defection from Aunty Rosa already. And that lady resented it bitterly. Black Sheep rose to leave the room.

"Come and say good-night," said Aunty Rosa, offering a withered cheek.

"Huh!" said Black Sheep. "I never kiss you, and I'm not going to show off. Tell that woman what I've done, and see what she says."

Black Sheep climbed into bed feeling that he had lost Heaven after a glimpse through the gates. In half an hour "that woman" was bending over him. Black Sheep flung up his right arm. It wasn't fair to come and hit him in the dark. Even Aunty Rosa never tried that. But no blow followed.

"Are you showing off? I won't tell you anything more than Aunty Rosa has, and *she* doesn't know everything," said Black Sheep as clearly as he could for the arms round his neck.

"Oh, my son—my little, little son! It was my fault—*my* fault, darling—and yet how could we help it? Forgive me, Punch." The voice died out in a broken whisper, and two hot tears fell on Black Sheep's forehead.

"Has she been making you cry too?" he asked. "You should see Jane cry. But you're nice, and Jane is a born liar—Aunty Rosa says so."

"Hush, Punch, hush! My boy, don't talk like that. Try to love me a little bit—a little bit. You don't know how I want it. Punch-*baba*, come back to me! I am your mother—your own mother—and never mind the rest. I know—yes, I know, dear. It doesn't matter now. Punch, won't you care for me a little?"

It is astonishing how much petting a big boy of ten can endure when he is quite sure that there is no one to laugh at him. Black Sheep had never been made much of before, and here was this beautiful woman treating him—Black Sheep, the Child of the Devil and the Inheritor of Undying Flame—as though he were a small god.

"I care for you a great deal, mother dear," he whispered at last, "and I'm glad you've come back; but are you sure Aunty Rosa told you everything?"

"Everything. What *does* it matter? But"—the voice broke with a sob that was also laughter—"Punch, my poor, dear, half-blind darling, don't you think it was a little foolish of you?"

"*No.* It saved a lickin'."

Mamma shuddered and slipped away in the darkness to write a long letter to papa. Here is an extract:

. . . Judy is a dear, plump little prig who adores the woman, and wears with as much gravity as her religious opinions—only eight, Jack!—a venerable horsehair atrocity which she calls her Bustle! I have just burned it, and the child is asleep in my bed as I write. She will come to me at once. Punch I cannot quite understand. He is well nourished, but seems to have been worried into a system of small deceptions which the woman magnifies into deadly sins. Don't you recollect our own up-bringing, dear, when the Fear of the Lord was so often the beginning of falsehood? I shall win Punch to me before long. I am taking the children away into the country to get them to know me, and, on the whole, I am content, or shall be when you come home, dear boy, and then, thank God, we shall be all under one roof again at last!

Three months later, Punch, no longer Black Sheep, has discovered that he is the veritable owner of a real, live, lovely mamma, who is also a sister, comforter, and friend, and that he must protect her till the father comes home. Deception does not suit the part of a protector, and, when one can do anything without question, where is the use of deception?

"Mother would be awfully cross if you walked through that ditch," says Judy, continuing a conversation.

"Mother's never angry," says Punch. "She'd just say, 'You're a little *pagal*'; and that's not nice, but I'll show."

Punch walks through the ditch and mires himself to the knees. "Mother dear," he shouts, "I'm just as dirty as I can pos-*sib*-ly be!"

"Then change your clothes as quickly as you pos-*sib*-ly can!" rings out mother's clear voice from the house. "And don't be a little *pagal!*"

"There! Told you so," says Punch. "It's all different now, and we are just as much mother's as if she had never gone."

Not altogether, oh, Punch, for when young lips have drunk deep of the bitter waters of Hate, Suspicion, and Despair, all the love in the world will not wholly take away that knowledge; though it may turn darkened eyes for a while to the light, and teach Faith where no Faith was.

HIS MAJESTY THE KING

"Where the word of a King is, there is power: And who may say unto him—What doest thou?"

"YETH! And Chimo to sleep at ve foot of ve bed, and ve pink pikky-book, and ve bwead—'cause I will be hungwy in ve night—and vat's all, Miss Biddums. And now give me one kiss and I'll go to sleep. So! Kite quiet. Ow! Ve pink pikky-book has slidded under ve pillow and ve bwead is cwumbling! Miss Biddums! Miss *Bid*-dums! I'm *so* uncomfy! Come and tuck me up, Miss Biddums."

His Majesty the King was going to bed; and poor, patient Miss Biddums, who had advertised herself humbly as a "young person, European, accustomed to the care of little children," was forced to wait upon his royal caprices. The going to bed was always a lengthy process, because his Majesty had a convenient knack of forgetting which of his many friends, from the *mehter's* son to the commissioner's daughter, he had prayed for, and, lest the Deity should take offense, was used to toil through his little prayers, in all reverence, five times in one evening. His Majesty the King believed in the efficacy of prayer as devoutly as he believed in Chimo the patient spaniel, or Miss Biddums, who could reach him down his gun—"with cursuffun caps—*reel* ones"—from the upper shelves of the big nursery cupboard.

At the door of the nursery his authority stopped. Beyond lay the empire of his father and mother—two very terrible people who had no time to waste upon his Majesty the

King. His voice was lowered when he passed the frontier of his own dominions, his actions were fettered, and his soul was filled with awe because of the grim man who lived among a wilderness of pigeon-holes and the most fascinating pieces of red tape, and the wonderful woman who was always getting into or stepping out of the big carriage. To the one belonged the mysteries of the "*duftar*-room"; to the other the great, reflected wilderness of the "Memsahib's room," where the shiny, scented dresses hung on pegs, miles and miles up in the air, and the just seen plateau of the toilet-table revealed an acreage of speckly combs, broidered "hana-fitch-bags," and "white-headed" brushes.

There was no room for his Majesty the King either in official reserve or mundane gorgeousness. He had discovered that, ages and ages ago—before even Chimo came to the house, or Miss Biddums had ceased grizzling over a packet of greasy letters which appeared to be her chief treasure on earth. His Majesty the King, therefore, wisely confined himself to his own territories, where only Miss Biddums, and she feebly, disputed his sway.

From Miss Biddums he had picked up his simple theology and welded it to the legends of gods and devils that he had learned in the servants' quarters.

To Miss Biddums he confided with equal trust his tattered garments and his more serious griefs. She would make everything whole. She knew exactly how the earth had been born, and had reassured the trembling soul of his Majesty the King that terrible time in July when it rained continuously for seven days and seven nights, and—there was no Ark ready and all the ravens had flown away! She was the most powerful person with whom he was brought into contact—always excepting the two remote and silent people beyond the nursery door.

How was his Majesty the King to know that, six years ago, in the summer of his birth, Mrs. Austell, turning over her husband's papers, had come upon the intemperate letter of a foolish woman who had been carried away by the silent

man's strength and personal beauty? How could he tell what evil the overlooked slip of note-paper had wrought in the mind of a desperately jealous wife? How could he, despite his wisdom, guess that his mother had chosen to make of it excuse for a bar and a division between herself and her husband that strengthened and grew harder to break with each year; that she, having unearthed this skeleton in the cupboard, had trained it into a household god which should be about their path and about their bed, and poison all their ways?

These things were beyond the province of his Majesty the King. He only knew that his father was daily absorbed in some mysterious work for a thing called the *Sirkar* and that his mother was the victim alternately of the *Nautch* and the *Burrakhana*. To these entertainments she was escorted by a captain-man for whom his Majesty the King had no regard.

"He *doesn't* laugh," he argued, with Miss Biddums, who would fain have taught him charity. "He only makes faces wiv his mouf, and when he wants to o-muse me I am *not* o-mused." And his Majesty the King shook his head as one who knew the deceitfulness of this world.

Morning and evening it was his duty to salute his father and mother—the former with a grave shake of the hand, and the latter with an equally grave kiss. Once, indeed, he had put his arms round his mother's neck, in the fashion he used toward Miss Biddums. The open-work of his sleeve-edge caught in an earring, and the last stage of his Majesty's little overture was a suppressed scream and summary dismissal to the nursery.

"It is w'ong," thought his Majesty the King, "to hug Memsahibs wiv fings in veir ears. I will amember." He never repeated the experiment.

Miss Biddums, it must be confessed, spoiled him as much as his nature admitted, in some sort of recompense for what she called "the hard ways of papa and mamma." She, like her charge, knew nothing of the trouble between man and

wife—the savage contempt for a woman's stupidity on the one side, or the dull, rankling anger on the other. Miss Biddums had looked after many little children in her time, and served in many establishments. Being a discreet woman, she observed little and said less, and, when her pupils went over the sea to the Great Unknown which she, with touching confidence in her hearers, called "Home," packed up her slender belongings and sought for employment afresh, lavishing all her love on each successive batch of ingrates. Only his Majesty the King had repaid her affection with interest; and in his uncomprehending ears she had told the tale of nearly all her hopes, her aspirations, the hopes that were dead, and the dazzling glories of her ancestral home in "*Cal*cutta, close to Wellington Square."

Everything above the average was in the eyes of his Majesty the King "Calcutta good." When Miss Biddums had crossed his royal will, he reversed the epithet to vex that estimable lady, and all things evil were, until the tears of repentance swept away spite, "Calcutta bad."

Now and again Miss Biddums begged for him the rare pleasure of a day in the society of the commissioner's child—the willful four-year-old Patsie, who, to the intense amazement of his Majesty the King, was idolized by her parents. On thinking the question out at length, by roads unknown to those who have left childhood behind, he came to the conclusion that Patsie was petted because she wore a big blue sash and yellow hair.

This precious discovery he kept to himself. The yellow hair was absolutely beyond his power, his own tousled wig being potato-brown; but something might be done toward the blue sash. He tied a large knot in his mosquito-curtains in order to remember to consult Patsie on their next meeting. She was the only child he had ever spoken to, and almost the only one that he had ever seen. The little memory and the very large and ragged knot held good.

"Patsie, lend me your blue wibbon," said his Majesty the King.

"You'll bewy it," said Patsie, doubtfully, mindful of certain fearful atrocities committed on her doll.

"No, I won't—twoofanhonor. It's for me to wear."

"Pooh!" said Patsie. "Boys don't wear sa-ashes. Zey's only for dirls."

"I didn't know." The face of his Majesty the King fell.

"Who wants ribbons? Are you playing horses, chicka-biddies?" said the commissioner's wife, stepping into the veranda.

"Toby wanted my sash," explained Patsie.

"I don't now," said his Majesty the King, hastily, feeling that with one of these terrible "grown-ups" his poor little secret would be shamelessly wrenched from him, and perhaps—most burning desecration of all—laughed at.

"I'll give you a cracker-cap," said the commissioner's wife. "Come along with me, Toby, and we'll choose it."

The cracker-cap was a stiff, three-pointed vermilion-and-tinsel splendor. His Majesty the King fitted it on his royal brow. The commissioner's wife had a face that children instinctively trusted, and her action, as she adjusted the toppling middle spike, was tender.

"Will it do as well?" stammered his Majesty the King.

"As what, little one?"

"As ve wibbon?"

"Oh, quite. Go and look at yourself in the glass."

The words were spoken in all sincerity and to help forward any absurd "dressing-up" amusement that the children might take into their minds. But the young savage has a keen sense of the ludicrous. His Majesty the King swung the great cheval-glass down, and saw his head crowned with the staring horror of a fool's cap—a thing which his father would rend to pieces if it ever came into his office. He plucked it off, and burst into tears.

"Toby," said the commissioner's wife, gravely, "you shouldn't give way to temper. I am very sorry to see it. It's wrong."

His Majesty the King sobbed inconsolably, and the heart of Patsie's mother was touched. She drew the child on to her knee. Clearly it was not temper alone.

"What is it, Toby? Won't you tell me? Aren't you well?"

The torrent of sobs and speech met, and fought for a time, with chokings and gulpings and gasps. Then, in a sudden rush, his Majesty the King was delivered of a few inarticulate sounds, followed by the words: "Go a—way you—dirty —little debbil!"

"Toby! What do you mean?"

"It's what he'd say. I *know* it is! He sait vat when vere was only a little, little eggy mess, on my t-t-unic; and he'd say it again, and laugh, if I went in wif vat on my head."

"Who would say that?"

"M-m-my papa! And I fought if I had ve blue wibbon, he'd let me play in ve waste-paper basket under ve table."

"*What* blue ribbon, childie?"

"Ve same vat Patsie had—ve big blue wibbon w-w-wound my t-t-tummy!"

"What is it, Toby? There's something on your mind. Tell me all about it, and perhaps I can help."

"Isn't anyfing," sniffed his Majesty, mindful of his manhood, and raising his head from the motherly bosom upon which it was resting. "I only fought vat you—you petted Patsie 'cause she had ve blue wibbon, and—and if I'd had ve blue wibbon too, m-my papa w-would pet me."

The secret was out, and his Majesty the King sobbed bitterly in spite of the arms round him, and the murmur of comfort on his heated little forehead.

Enter Patsie tumultuously, embarrassed by several lengths of the commissioner's pet *mahseer*-rod. "Tum along, Toby! Zere's a *chu-chu* lizard in ze *chick*, and I've told Chimo to watch him till we tum. If we poke him wiz zis his tail will go *wiggle-wiggle* and fall off. Tum along! I can't weach."

"I'm comin'," said his Majesty the King, climbing down from the commissioner's wife's knee after a hasty kiss.

Two minutes later, the *chu-chu* lizard's tail was wriggling on the matting of the veranda, and the children were gravely poking it with splinters from the *chick*, to urge its exhausted vitality into "just one wiggle more, 'cause it doesn't hurt *chu-chu*."

The commissioner's wife stood in the doorway and watched: "Poor little mite! A blue sash—and my own precious Patsie! I wonder if the best of us, or we who love them best, ever understand what goes on in their topsy-turvy little heads?"

A big tear splashed on the commissioner's wife's wedding-ring, and she went indoors to devise a tea for the benefit of his Majesty the King.

"Their souls aren't in their tummies at that age in this climate," said the commissioner's wife, "but they are not far off. I wonder if I could make Mrs. Austell understand. Poor little fellow!"

With simple craft, the commissioner's wife called on Mrs. Austell and spoke long and lovingly about children; inquiring specially for his Majesty the King.

"He's with his governess," said Mrs. Austell, and the tone intimated that she was not interested.

The commissioner's wife, unskilled in the art of war, continued her questionings. "I don't know," said Mrs. Austell. "These things are left to Miss Biddums, and, of course, she does not ill-treat the child."

The commissioner's wife left hastily. The last sentence jarred upon her nerves. "Doesn't *ill-treat* the child! As if that were all! I wonder what Tom would say if I only 'didn't ill-treat' Patsie!"

Thenceforward his Majesty the King was an honored guest at the commissioner's house, and the chosen friend of Patsie, with whom he blundered into as many scrapes as the compound and the servants' quarters afforded. Patsie's mamma was always ready to give counsel, help, and sym-

pathy, and, if need were and callers few, to enter into their games with an abandon that would have shocked the sleek-haired subalterns who squirmed painfully in their chairs when they came to call on her whom they profanely nicknamed "Mother Bunch."

Yet, in spite of Patsie and Patsie's mamma, and the love that these two lavished upon him, his Majesty the King fell grievously from grace, and committed no less a sin than that of theft—unknown, it is true, but burdensome.

There came a man to the door one day, when his Majesty was playing in the hall and the bearer had gone to dinner, with a packet for his Majesty's mamma. And he put it upon the hall table, said that there was no answer, and departed.

Presently, the pattern of the dado ceased to interest his Majesty, while the packet, a white, neatly wrapped one of fascinating shape, interested him very much indeed. His mamma was out, so was Miss Biddums, and there was pink string round the packet. He greatly desired the pink string. It would help him in many of his little businesses—the haulage across the floor of his small cane chair, the torturing of Chimo, who could never understand harness—and so forth. If he took the string, it would be his own, and nobody would be any the wiser. He certainly could not pluck up sufficient courage to ask mamma for it. Wherefore, mounting upon a chair, he carefully untied the string and, behold, the stiff white paper spread out in four directions, and revealed a beautiful little leather box with gold lines upon it! He tried to replace the string, but that was a failure. So he opened the box to get full satisfaction for his iniquity, and saw a most beautiful star that shone and winked, and was altogether lovely and desirable.

"Vat," said his Majesty, meditatively, "is a 'parkle cwown, like what I will wear when I go to heaven. I will wear it on my head—Miss Biddums says so. I would like to wear it *now*. I would like to play wiv it. I will take it away and play wiv it, very careful, until mamma asks for

it. I fink it was bought for me to play wiv—same as my cart."

His Majesty the King was arguing against his conscience, and he knew it, for he thought immediately after: "Never mind. I will keep it to play wiv until mamma says where is it, and then I will say: 'I tookt it and I am sorry.' I will not hurt it because it is a 'parkle cwown. But Miss Biddums will tell me to put it back. I will not show it to Miss Biddums."

If mamma had come in at that moment all would have gone well. She did not, and his Majesty the King stuffed paper, case, and jewel into the breast of his blouse and marched to the nursery.

"When mamma asks I will tell," was the salve that he laid upon his conscience. But mamma never asked, and for three whole days his Majesty the King gloated over his treasure. It was of no earthly use to him, but it was splendid, and, for aught he knew, something dropped from the heavens themselves. Still mamma made no inquiries, and it seemed to him, in his furtive peeps, as though the shiny stones grew dim. What was the use of a 'parkle cwown if it made a little boy feel all bad in his inside? He had the pink string as well as the other treasure, but greatly he wished that he had not gone beyond the string. It was his first experience of iniquity, and it pained him after the flush of possession and secret delight in the "'parkle cwown" had died away.

Each day that he delayed rendered confession to the people beyond the nursery doors more impossible. Now and again he determined to put himself in the path of the beautifully attired lady as she was going out, and explain that he and no one else was the possessor of a "'parkle cwown," most beautiful and quite uninquired for. But she passed hurriedly to her carriage, and the opportunity was gone before his Majesty the King could draw the deep breath which clinches noble resolve. The dread secret cut him off from Miss Biddums, Patsie, and the commissioner's wife, and—

doubly hard fate—when he brooded over it Patsie said, and told her mother, that he was cross.

The days were very long to his Majesty the King, and the nights longer still. Miss Biddums had informed him, more than once, what was the ultimate destiny of "fieves," and when he passed the interminable mud flanks of the central jail, he shook in his little strapped shoes.

But release came after an afternoon spent in playing boats by the edge of the tank at the bottom of the garden. His Majesty the King went to tea, and, for the first time in his memory, the meal revolted him. His nose was very cold, and his cheeks were burning hot. There was a weight about his feet, and he pressed his head several times to make sure that it was not swelling as he sat.

"I feel vevy funny," said his Majesty the King, rubbing his nose. "Vere's a buzzing in my head."

He went to bed quietly. Miss Biddums was out and the bearer undressed him.

The sin of the " 'parkle cwown" was forgotten in the acuteness of the discomfort to which he roused after a leaden sleep of some hours. He was thirsty, and the bearer had forgotten to leave the drinking-water. "Miss Biddums! Miss Biddums! I'm so kirsty!"

No answer. Miss Biddums had leave to attend the wedding of a Calcutta school-mate. His Majesty the King had forgotten that.

"I want a dwink of water!" he cried, but his voice was dried up in his throat. "I want a dwink! Vere is ve glass?"

He sat up in bed and looked round. There was a murmur of voices from the other side of the nursery door. It was better to face the terrible unknown than to choke in the dark. He slipped out of bed, but his feet were strangely willful, and he reeled once or twice. Then he pushed the door open and staggered—a puffed and purple-faced little figure—into the brilliant light of the dining-room full of pretty ladies.

"I'm vevy hot! I'v vevy uncomfitivle," moaned his

Majesty the King, clinging to the portière, "and vere's no water in ve glass, and I'm *so* kirsty. Give me a dwink of water."

An apparition in black and white—his Majesty the King could hardly see distinctly—lifted him up to the level of the table, and felt his wrists and forehead. The water came, and he drank deeply, his teeth chattering against the edge of the tumbler. Then every one seemed to go away—every one except the huge man in black and white, who carried him back to his bed; the mother and father following. And the sin of the " 'parkle cwown" rushed back and took possession of the terrified soul.

"I'm a fief!" he gasped. "I want to tell Miss Biddums vat I'm a fief. Vere is Miss Biddums?"

Miss Biddums had come and was bending over him. "I'm a fief," he whispered. "A fief—like ve men in the pwison. But I'll tell now. I tookt . . . I tookt ve 'parkle cwown when the man that came left it in ve hall. I bwoke ve paper and ve little bwown box, and it looked shiny, and I tookt it to play wif, and I was afwaid. It's in ve dooly-box at ve bottom. No one *never* asked for it, but I was afwaid. Oh, go an' get ve dooly-box!"

Miss Biddums obediently stooped to the lowest shelf of the *almirah* and unearthed the big paper box in which his Majesty the King kept his dearest possessions. Under the tin soldiers, and a layer of mud pellets for a pellet bow, winked and blazed a diamond star, wrapped roughly in a half-sheet of note-paper whereon were a few words.

Somebody was crying at the head of the bed, and a man's hand touched the forehead of his Majesty the King, who grasped the packet and spread it on the bed.

"Vat is ve 'parkle cwown," he said and wept bitterly; for now that he had made restitution he would fain have kept the shining splendor with him.

"It concerns you, too," said a voice at the head of the bed. "Read the note. This is not the time to keep back anything."

The note was curt, very much to the point, and signed by a single initial. "*If you wear this to-morrow night I shall know what to expect.*" The date was three weeks old.

A whisper followed, and the deeper voice returned: "And you drifted as far apart as *that!* I think it makes us quits now, doesn't it? Oh, can't we drop this folly once and for all? Is it worth it, dárling?"

"Kiss me, too," said his Majesty the King, dreamily. "You isn't *vevy* angwy, is you?"

The fever burned itself out, and his Majesty the King slept.

When he waked, it was in a new world—peopled by his father and mother as well as Miss Biddums; and there was much love in that world and no morsel of fear, and more petting than was good for several little boys. His Majesty the King was too young to moralize on the uncertainty of things human, or he would have been impressed with the singular advantages of crime—ay, black sin. Behold, he had stolen the " 'parkle cwown," and his reward was love, and the right to play in the waste-paper basket under the table "for always."

. . . . . .

He trotted over to spend an afternoon with Patsie, and the commissioner's wife would have kissed him. "No, not vere," said his Majesty the King, with superb insolence, fencing one corner of his mouth with his hand. "Vat's my mamma's place—vere she kisses me."

"Oh!" said the commissioner's wife briefly. Then to herself: "Well, I suppose I ought to be glad for his sake. Children are selfish little grubs and—I've got my Patsie."

THE DRUMS OF THE FORE AND AFT

"And a little child shall lead them"

In the Army List they still stand as "The Fore and Fit Princess Hohenzollern-Sigmaringen-Auspach's Merther-Tydfilshire Own Royal Loyal Light Infantry, Regimental District 329A," but the army through all its barracks and canteens knows them now as the "Fore and Aft." They may in time do something that shall make their new title honorable, but at present they are bitterly ashamed, and the man who calls them "Fore and Aft" does so at the risk of the head which is on his shoulders.

Two words breathed into the stables of a certain cavalry regiment will bring the men out into the streets with belts and mops and bad language; but a whisper of "Fore and Aft" will bring out this regiment with rifles.

Their one excuse is that they came again and did their best to finish the job in style. But for a time all their world knows that they were openly beaten, whipped, dumb-cowed, shaking and afraid. The men know it; their officers know it; the Horse Guards know it, and when the next war comes the enemy will know it also. There are two or three regiments of the line that have a black mark against their names which they will then wipe out, and it will be excessively inconvenient for the troops upon whom they do their wiping.

The courage of the British soldier is officially supposed to be above proof, and, as a general rule, it is so. The exceptions are decently shoveled out of sight, only to be referred to in the freshest of unguarded talk that occasionally swamps a mess-table at midnight. Then one hears strange and horrible stories of men not following their officers, of orders being given by those who had no right to give them, and of

disgrace that, but for the standing luck of the British Army, might have ended in brilliant disaster. These are unpleasant stories to listen to, and the messes tell them under their breath, sitting by the big wood fires, and the young officer bows his head and thinks to himself, please God, his men shall never behave unhandily.

The British soldier is not altogether to be blamed for occasional lapses; but this verdict he should not know. A moderately intelligent general will waste six months in mastering the craft of the particular war that he may be waging; a colonel may utterly misunderstand the capacity of his regiment for three months after it has taken the field; and even a company commander may err and be deceived as to the temper and temperament of his own handful; wherefore the soldier, and the soldier of to-day more particularly, should not be blamed for falling back. He should be shot or hanged afterward—*pour encourager les autres;* but he should not be vilified in newspapers, for that is want of tact and waste of space.

He has, let us say, been in the service of the empress for, perhaps, four years. He will leave in another two years. He has no inherited morals, and four years are not sufficient to drive toughness into his fiber, or to teach him how holy a thing is his regiment. He wants to drink, he wants to enjoy himself—in India he wants to save money—and he does not in the least like getting hurt. He had received just sufficient education to make him understand half the purport of the orders he receives, and to speculate on the nature of clean, incised, and shattering wounds. Thus, if he is told to deploy under fire preparatory to an attack, he knows that he runs a very great risk of being killed while he is deploying, and suspects that he is being thrown away to gain ten minutes' time. He may either deploy with desperate swiftness, or he may shuffle, or bunch, or break, according to the discipline under which he has lain for four years.

Armed with imperfect knowledge, cursed with the rudiments of an imagination, hampered by the intense selfish-

ness of the lower classes, and unsupported by any regimental associations, this young man is suddenly introduced to an enemy who in eastern lands is always ugly, generally tall and hairy, and frequently noisy. If he looks to the right and the left and sees old soldiers—men of twelve years' service, who, he knows, know what they are about—taking a charge, rush, or demonstration without embarrassment, he is consoled and applies his shoulder to the butt of his rifle with a stout heart. His peace is the greater if he hears a senior, who has taught him his soldiering and broken his head on occasion, whispering: "They'll shout and carry on like this for five minutes. Then they'll rush in, and then we've got 'em by the short hairs!"

But, on the other hand, if he sees only men of his own term of service, turning white and playing with their triggers and saying: "What the hell's up now?" while the company commanders are sweating into their sword-hilts and shouting: "Front-rank, fix bayonets. Steady, there—steady! Sight for three hundred—no, for five! Lie down, all! Steady! Front-rank, kneel!" and so forth, he becomes unhappy; and grows acutely miserable when he hears a comrade turn over with the rattle of fire-irons falling into the fender, and the grunt of a pole-axed ox. If he can be moved about a little and allowed to watch the effect of his own fire on the enemy he feels merrier, and may be then worked up to the blind passion of fighting; which is, contrary to general belief, controlled by a chills devil and shakes men like ague. If he is not moved about and begins to feel cold at the pit of the stomach, and in that crisis is badly mauled and hears orders that were never given, he will break, and he will break badly; and of all things under the sight of the sun there is nothing more terrible than a broken British regiment. When the worst comes to the worst and the panic is really epidemic, the men must be e'en let go, and the company commanders had better escape to the enemy and stay there for safety's sake. If they can be made to come again they are not pleasant men to meet, because they will not break twice.

About thirty years from this date, when we have succeeded in half educating everything that wears trousers, our army will be a beautifully unreliable machine. It will know too much and it will do too little. Later still, when all men are at the mental level of the officer of to-day, it will sweep the earth. Speaking roughly, you must employ either blackguards or gentlemen, or, best of all, blackguards commanded by gentlemen, to do butcher's work with efficiency and dispatch. The ideal soldier should, of course, think for himself —the *pocket-book* says so. Unfortunately, to attain this virtue, he has to pass through the phase of thinking of himself, and that is misdirected genius. A blackguard may be slow to think for himself, but he is genuinely anxious to kill, and a little punishment teaches him how to guard his own skin and perforate another's. A powerfully prayerful Highland regiment, officered by rank Presbyterians, is, perhaps, one degree more terrible in action than a hard-bitten thousand of irresponsible Irish ruffians led by most improper young unbelievers. But these things prove the rule—which is that the midway men are not to be trusted alone. They have ideas about the value of life and an up-bringing that has not taught them to go on and take the chances. They are carefully unprovided with a backing of comrades who have been shot over, and until that backing is reintroduced, as a great many regimental commanders intend it shall be, they are more liable to disgrace themselves than the size of the empire or the dignity of the army allows. Their officers are as good as good can be, because their training begins early, and God has arranged that a clean-run youth of the British middle classes shall, in the matter of backbone, brains, and bowels, surpass all other youths. For this reason a child of eighteen will stand up, doing nothing, with a tin sword in his hand and joy in his heart until he is dropped. If he dies, he dies like a gentleman. If he lives, he writes home that he has been "potted," "sniped," "chipped" or "cut over," and sits down to besiege the government for a wound-gratuity until the next little war breaks out, when he perjures

himself before a medical board, blarneys his colonel, burns incense round his adjutant, and is allowed to go to the front once more.

Which homily brings me directly to a brace of the most finished little fiends that ever banged drum or tootled fife in the band of a British regiment. They ended their sinful career by open and flagrant mutiny and were shot for it. Their names were Jakin and Lew—Piggy Lew—and they were bold, bad drummer-boys, both of them frequently birched by the drum-major of the Fore and Aft.

Jakin was a stunted child of fourteen, and Lew was about the same age. When not looked after, they smoked and drank. They swore habitually after the manner of the barrack-room, which is cold-swearing and comes from between clinched teeth; and they fought religiously once a week. Jakin had sprung from some London gutter and may or may not have passed through Dr. Barnado's hands ere he arrived at the dignity of drummer-boy. Lew could remember nothing except the regiment and the delight of listening to the band from his earliest years. He hid somewhere in his grimy little soul a genuine love for music, and was most mistakenly furnished with the head of a cherub; insomuch that beautiful ladies who watched the regiment in church were wont to speak of him as a "darling." They never heard his vitriolic comments on their manners and morals, as he walked back to barracks with the band and matured fresh causes of offense against Jakin.

The other drummer-boys hated both lads on account of their illogical conduct. Jakin might be pounding Lew, or Lew might be rubbing Jakin's head in the dirt, but any attempt at aggression on the part of an outsider was met by the combined forces of Lew and Jakin; and the consequences were painful. The boys were the Ishmaels of the corps, but wealthy Ishmaels, for they sold battles in alternate weeks for the sport of the barracks when they were not pitted against other boys; and thus amassed money.

On this particular day there was dissension in the camp.

They had just been convicted afresh of smoking, which is bad for little boys who use plug tobacco, and Lew's contention was that Jakin had "stunk so 'orrid bad from keepin' the pipe in his pocket," that he and he alone was responsible for the birching they were both tingling under.

"I tell you I 'id the pipe back o' barricks," said Jakin, pacifically.

"You're a bloomin' liar," said Lew, without heat.

"You're a bloomin' little barstard," said Jakin, strong in the knowledge that his own ancestry was unknown.

Now there is one word in the extended vocabulary of barrack-room abuse that cannot pass without comment. You may call a man a thief and risk nothing. You may even call him a coward without finding more than a boot whizz past your ear, but you must not call a man a bastard unless you are prepared to prove it on his front teeth.

"You might ha' kep' that till I wasn't so sore," said Lew, sorrowfully, dodging round Jakin's guard.

"I'll make you sorer," said Jakin, genially, and got home on Lew's alabaster forehead. All would have gone well and this story, as the books say, would never have been written, had not his evil fate prompted the bazaar-sergeant's son, a long, employless man of five-and-twenty, to put in an appearance after the first round. He was eternally in need of money, and knew that the boys had silver.

"Fighting again," said he. "I'll report you to my father, and he'll report you to the color-sergeant."

"What's that to you?" said Jakin, with an unpleasant dilation of the nostrils.

"Oh! nothing to *me*. You'll get into trouble, and you've been up too often to afford that."

"What the hell do you know about what we've done?" asked Lew the Seraph. "*You* aren't in the army, you lousy, cadging civilian!"

He closed in on the man's left flank.

"Jes' 'cause you find two gentlemen settlin' their diff'rences with their fistes you stick in your ugly nose where you

aren't wanted. Run 'ome to your 'arf-caste slut of a ma—or we'll give you what-for," said Jakin.

The man attempted reprisals by knocking the boys' heads together. The scheme would have succeeded had not Jakin punched him vehemently in the stomach, or had Lew refrained from kicking his shins. They fought together, bleeding and breathless, for half an hour, and, after heavy punishment, triumphantly pulled down their opponent as terriers pull down a jackal.

"Now," gasped Jakin, "I'll give you what-for." He proceeded to pound the man's features while Lew stamped on the outlying portions of his anatomy. Chivalry is not a strong point in the composition of the average drummer-boy. He fights, as do his betters, to make his mark.

Ghastly was the ruin that escaped, and awful was the wrath of the bazaar-sergeant. Awful too was the scene in orderly-room when the two reprobates appeared to answer the charge of half murdering a "civilian." The bazaar-sergeant thirsted for a criminal action, and his son lied. The boys stood to attention while the black clouds of evidence accumulated.

"You little devils are more trouble than the rest of the regiment put together," said the colonel, angrily. "One might as well admonish thistledown, and I can't well put you in cells or under stoppages. You must be flogged again."

"Beg y' pardon, sir. Can't we say nothin' in our own defense, sir?" shrilled Jakin.

"Hey! What? Are you going to argue with me?" said the colonel.

"No, sir," said Lew. "But if a man come to you, sir, and said he was going to report you, sir, for 'aving a bit of a turn-up with a friend, sir, an' wanted to get money out o' *you*, sir—"

The orderly-room exploded in a roar of laughter. "Well?" said the colonel.

"That was what that measly *jarnwar* there did, sir, and 'e'd a' *done* it, sir, if we 'adn't prevented 'im. We didn't

'it 'im much, sir. 'E 'adn't no manner o' right to interfere with us, sir. I don't mind bein' flogged by the drum-major, sir, nor yet reported by *any* corp'ral, but I'm—but I don't think it's fair, sir, for a civilian to come an' talk over a man in the army."

A second shout of laughter shook the orderly-room, but the colonel was grave.

"What sort of characters have these boys?" he asked of the regimental sergeant-major.

"Accordin' to the bandmaster, sir," returned that revered official—the only soul in the regiment whom the boys feared —"they do everything *but* lie, sir."

"Is it like we'd go for that man for fun, sir?" said Lew, pointing to the plaintiff.

"Oh, admonished—admonished!" said the colonel, testily, and when the boys had gone he read the bazaar-sergeant's son a lecture on the sin of unprofitable meddling, and gave orders that the bandmaster should keep the drums in better discipline.

"If either of you come to practice again with so much as a scratch on your two ugly little faces," thundered the bandmaster, "I'll tell the drum-major to take the skin off your backs. Understand that, you young devils."

Then he repented of his speech for just the length of time that Lew, looking like a seraph in red worsted embellishments, took the place of one of the trumpets—in hospital—and rendered the echo of a battle-piece. Lew certainly was a musician, and had often in his more exalted moments expressed a yearning to master every instrument of the band.

"There's nothing to prevent your becoming a bandmaster, Lew," said the bandmaster, who had composed waltzes of his own, and worked day and night in the interests of the band.

"What did he say?" demanded Jakin, after practice.

"Said I might be a bloomin' bandmaster, an' be asked in to 'ave a glass o' sherry-wine on mess-nights."

"Ho! Said you might be a bloomin' non-combatant, did

'e? That's just about wot 'e would say. When I've put in my boy's service—it's a bloomin' shame that doesn't count for pension—I'll take on a privit. Then I'll be a lance in a year—knowin' what I know about the ins an' outs o' things. In three years I'll be a bloomin' sergeant. I won't marry then, not I! I'll 'old on and learn the orf'cers' ways an' apply for exchange into a reg'ment that doesn't know all about me. Then I'll be a bloomin' orf'cer. Then I'll ask you to 'ave a glass o' sherry-wine, *Mister* Lew, an' you'll bloomin' well 'ave to stay in the hanty-room while the mess-sergeant brings it to your dirty 'ands."

"S'pose *I*'m going to be a bandmaster? Not I, quite. I'll be a orf'cer too. There's nothin' like taking to a thing an' stickin' to it, the schoolmaster says. The reg'ment don't go 'ome for another seven years. I'll be a lance then or near to."

Thus the boys discussed their futures, and conducted themselves with exemplary piety for a week. That is to say, Lew started a flirtation with the color-sergeant's daughter, aged thirteen—"not," as he explained to Jakin, "with any intention o' matrimony, but by way o' keepin' my 'and in." And the black-haired Cris Delighan enjoyed that flirtation more than previous ones, and the other drummer-boys raged furiously together, and Jakin preached sermons on the dangers of "bein' tangled along o' petticoats."

But neither love nor virtue would have held Lew long in the paths of propriety had not the rumor gone abroad that the regiment was to be sent on active service, to take part in a war which, for the sake of brevity, we will call "The War of the Lost Tribes."

The barracks had the rumor almost before the mess-room, and of all the nine hundred men in barracks not ten had seen a shot fired in anger. The colonel had, twenty years ago, assisted at a frontier expedition; one of the majors had seen service at the Cape; a confirmed deserter in E Company had helped to clear streets in Ireland; but that was all. The regiment had been put by for many years. The overwhelm-

ing mass of its rank and file had from three to four years' service; the non-commissioned officers were under thirty years old; and men and sergeants alike had forgotten to speak of the stories, written in brief upon the colors—the new colors that had been formally blessed by an archbishop in England ere the regiment came away.

They wanted to go to the front—they were enthusiastically anxious to go—but they had no knowledge of what war meant, and there was none to tell them. They were an educated regiment, the percentage of school certificates in their ranks was high, and most of the men could do more than read and write. They had been recruited in loyal observance of the territorial idea; but they themselves had no notion of that idea. They were made up of drafts from an overpopulated manufacturing district. The system had put flesh and muscle upon their small bones, but it could not put heart into the sons of those who for generations had done overmuch work for overscanty pay, had sweated in drying rooms, stooped over looms, coughed among white-lead and shivered on lime-barges. The men had found food and rest in the army, and now they were going to fight "niggers"—people who ran away if you shook a stick at them. Wherefore they cheered lustily when the rumor ran, and the shrewd, clerkly non-commissioned officers speculated on the chances of battle and of saving their pay. At headquarters men said: "The Fore and Fit have never been under fire within the last generation. Let us, therefore, break them in easily by setting them to guard lines of communication." And this would have been done but for the fact that British regiments were wanted—badly wanted—at the front, and there were doubtful native regiments that could fill the minor duties. "Brigade 'em with two strong regiments," said headquarters. "They may be knocked about a bit, but they'll learn their business before they come through. Nothing like a night-alarm and a little cutting-up of stragglers to make a regiment smart in the field. Wait till they've had half a dozen sentries' throats cut."

The colonel wrote with delight that the temper of his men was excellent, that the regiment was all that could be wished and as sound as a bell. The majors smiled with a sober joy, and the subalterns waltzed in pairs down the mess-room after dinner and nearly shot themselves at revolver-practice. But there was consternation in the hearts of Jakin and Lew. What was to be done with the drums? Would the band go to the front? How many of the drums would accompany the regiment?

They took council together, sitting in a tree and smoking.

"It's more than a bloomin' toss-up they'll leave us be'ind at the depot with the women. You'll like that," said Jakin, sarcastically.

" 'Cause o' Cris, y' mean? Wot's a woman, or a 'ole bloomin' depot o' women, 'longside o' the chanst of field-service? You know I'm as keen on goin' as you," said Lew.

"Wish I was a bloomin' bugler," said Jakin, sadly. "They'll take Tom Kidd along, that I can plaster a wall with, an' like as not they won't take us."

"Then let's go an' make Tom Kidd so bloomin' sick 'e can't bugle no more. You 'old 'is 'ands, an' I'll kick him," said Lew, wriggling on the branch.

"That ain't no good neither. We ain't the sort o' characters to presoom on our rep'tations—they're bad. If they have the band at the depot we don't go, and no error *there*. If they take the band we may get cast for medical unfitness. Are you medical fit, Piggy?" said Jakin, digging Lew in the ribs with force.

"Yus," said Lew, with an oath. "The doctor says your 'eart's weak through smokin' on an empty stummick. Throw a chest an' I'll try yer."

Jakin threw out his chest, which Lew smote with all his might. Jakin turned very pale, gasped, crowed, screwed up his eyes, and said "That's all right."

"You'll do," said Lew. "I've 'eard o' men dyin' when you 'it 'em fair on the breast-bone."

"Don't bring us no nearer goin', though," said Jakin. "Do you know where we're ordered?"

"Gawd knows, an' 'E won't split on a pal. Somewheres up to the front to kill Paythans—hairy big beggars that turn you inside out if they get 'old o' you. They say their women are good-looking, too."

"Any loot?" asked the abandoned Jakin.

"Not a bloomin' anna, they say, unless you dig up the ground an' see what the niggers 'ave 'id. They're a poor lot." Jakin stood upright on the branch and gazed across the plain.

"Lew," said he, "there's the colonel coming. Colonel's a good old beggar. Let's go an' talk to 'im."

Lew nearly fell out of the tree at the audacity of the suggestion. Like Jakin he feared not God neither regarded he man, but there are limits even to the audacity of drummer-boy, and to speak to a colonel was . . .

But Jakin had slid down the trunk and doubled in the direction of the colonel. That officer was walking wrapped in thought and visions of a C.B.—yes, even a K.C.B., for had he not at command one of the best regiments of the line —the Fore and Fit? And he was aware of two small boys charging down upon him. Once before it had been solemnly reported to him that "the drums were in a state of mutiny;" Jakin and Lew being the ringleaders. This looked like an organized conspiracy.

The boys halted at twenty yards, walked to the regulation four paces, and saluted together, each as well set-up as a ramrod and little taller.

The colonel was in a genial mood; the boys appeared very forlorn and unprotected on the desolate plain, and one of them was handsome.

"Well!" said the colonel, recognizing them. "Are you going to pull me down in the open? I'm sure I never interfere with you, even though"—he sniffed suspiciously—"you have been smoking."

It was time to strike while the iron was hot. Their hearts beat tumultuously.

"Beg y' pardon, sir," began Jakin. "The reg'ment's ordered on active service, sir?"

"So I believe," said the colonel, courteously.

"Is the band goin', sir?" said both together. Then, without pause, "We're goin', sir, ain't we?"

"You!" said the colonel, stepping back the more fully to take in the two small figures. "You! You'd die in the first march."

"No, we wouldn't, sir. We can march with the regiment anywheres—p'rade an' anywhere else," said Jakin.

"If Tom Kidd goes 'e'll shut up like a clasp-knife," said Lew. "Tom 'as very close veins in both 'is legs, sir."

"Very how much?"

"Very close veins, sir. That's why they swells after long p'rade, sir. If 'e can go, we can go, sir."

Again the colonel looked at them long and intently.

"Yes, the band is going," he said as gravely as though he had been addressing a brother officer. "Have you any parents, either of you two?"

"No, sir," rejoicingly from Lew and Jakin. "We're both orphans, sir. There's no one to be considered of on our account, sir."

"You poor little sprats, and you want to go up to the front with the regiment, do you? Why?"

"I've wore the queen's uniform for two years," said Jakin. "It's very 'ard, sir, that a man don't get no recompense for doin' 'is dooty, sir."

"An'—an' if I don't go, sir," interrupted Lew, "the bandmaster 'e says 'e'll catch an' make a bloo—a blessed musician o' me, sir. Before I've seen any service, sir."

The colonel made no answer for a long time. Then he said, quietly: "If you're passed by the doctor I dare say you can go. I shouldn't smoke if I were you."

The boys saluted and disappeared. The colonel walked home and told the story to his wife, who nearly cried over it. The colonel was well pleased. If that was the temper of the children, what would not the men do?

Jakin and Lew entered the boys' barrack-room with great stateliness, and refused to hold any conversation with their comrades for at least ten minutes. Then, bursting with pride, Jakin drawled: "I've bin intervooin' the colonel. Good old beggar is the colonel. Says I to 'im, 'Colonel,' says I, 'let me go to the front, along o' the reg'ment.' 'To the front you shall go,' says 'e, 'an' I only wish there was more like you among the dirty little devils that bang the bloomin' drums.' Kidd, if you throw your 'couterments at me for tellin' you the truth to your own advantage, your legs'll swell."

None the less there was a battle-royal in the barrack-room, for the boys were consumed with envy and hate, and neither Jakin nor Lew behaved in conciliatory-wise.

"I'm goin' out to say adoo to my girl," said Lew, to cap the climax. "Don't none o' you touch my kit, because it's wanted for active service, me bein' specially invited to go by the colonel."

He strolled forth and whistled in the clump of trees at the back of the married quarters till Cris came to him, and, the preliminary kisses being given and taken, Lew began to explain the situation.

"I'm goin' to the front with the reg'ment," he said, valiantly.

"Piggy, you're a little liar," said Cris, but her heart misgave her, for Lew was not in the habit of lying.

"Liar yourself, Cris," said Lew, slipping an arm round her. "I'm goin'. When the reg'ment marches out you'll see me with 'em, all galliant and gay. Give us another kiss, Cris, on the strength of it."

"If you'd on'y a-stayed at the depot—where you *ought* to ha' bin—you could get as many of 'em as—as you dam please," whimpered Cris, putting up her mouth.

"It's 'ard, Cris. I grant you it's 'ard. But what's a man to do? If I a-stayed at the depot, you wouldn't think anything of me."

"Like as not, but I'd 'ave you with me, Piggy. An' all the thinkin' in the world isn't like kissin'."

"An' all the kissin' in the world isn't like 'avin' a medal to wear on the front o' your coat."

"*You* won't get no medal."

"Oh, yus, I shall though. Me an' Jakin are the only acting-drummers that'll be took along. All the rest is full men, an' we'll get our medals with them."

"They might ha' taken anybody but you, Piggy. You'll get killed—you're so venturesome. Stay with me, Piggy, darlin', down at the depot, an' I'll love you true forever."

"Ain't you goin' to do that *now*, Cris? You said you was."

"O' course I am, but th' other's more comfortable. Wait till you've growed a bit, Piggy. You aren't no taller than me now."

"I've bin in the army for two years an' I'm not goin' to get out of a chanst o' seein' service an' don't you try to make me do so. I'll come back, Cris, an' when I take on as a man I'll marry you—marry you when I'm a lance."

"Promise, Piggy?"

Lew reflected on the future as arranged by Jakin a short time previously, but Cris's mouth was very near to his own.

"I promise, s'elp me Gawd!" said he.

Cris slid an arm round his neck.

"I won't 'old you back no more, Piggy. Go away an' get your medal, an' I'll make you a new button-bag as nice as I know how," she whispered.

"Put some o' your 'air into it, Cris, an' I'll keep it in my pocket so long's I'm alive."

Then Cris wept anew, and the interview ended. Public feeling among the drummer-boys rose to fever pitch and the lives of Jakin and Lew became unenviable. Not only had they been permitted to enlist two years before the regulation boy's age—fourteen—but, by virtue, it seemed, of their extreme youth, they were allowed to go to the front—which

thing had not happened to acting-drummers within the knowledge of boy. The band which was to accompany the regiment had been cut down to the regulation twenty men, the surplus returning to the ranks. Jakin and Lew were attached to the band as supernumeraries, though they would much have preferred being company buglers.

"'Don't matter much," said Jakin after the medical inspection. "Be thankful that we're 'lowed to go at all. The doctor 'e said that if we could stand what we took from the bazaar sergeant's son we'd stand pretty nigh anything."

"Which we will," said Lew, looking tenderly at the ragged and ill-made housewife that Cris had given him, with a lock of her hair worked into a sprawling "I," upon the cover. "It was the best I could," she sobbed. "I wouldn't let mother nor the sergeant's tailor 'elp me. Keep it always, Piggy, an' remember I love you true."

They marched to the railway station, nine hundred and sixty strong, and every soul in cantonments turned out to see them go. The drummers gnashed their teeth at Jakin and Lew marching with the band, the married women wept upon the platform, and the regiment cheered its noble self black in the face.

"A nice level lot," said the colonel to the second in command as they watched the first four companies entraining.

"Fit to do anything," said the second in command, enthusiastically. "But it seems to me they're a thought too young and tender for the work in hand. It's bitter cold up at the front now."

"They're sound enough," said the colonel. "We must take our chance of sick casualties."

So they went northward, ever northward, past droves and droves of camels, armies of camp followers, and legions of laden mules, the throng thickening day by day, till with a shriek the train pulled up at a hopelessly congested junction where six lines of temporary track accommodated six forty-wagon trains; where whistles blew, Babus sweated and commissariat officers swore from dawn till far into the

night amid the wind-driven chaff of the fodder-bales and the lowing of a thousand steers.

"Hurry up—you're badly wanted at the front," was the message that greeted the Fore and Aft, and the occupants of the Red Cross carriages told the same tale.

" 'Tisn't so much the bloomin' fightin'," gasped a head-bound trooper of hussars to a knot of admiring Fore and Afts. " 'Tisn't so much the bloomin' fightin', though there's enough o' that. It's the bloomin' food an' the bloomin' climate. Frost all night 'cept when it hails, and biling sun all day, and the water stinks fit to knock you down. I got my 'ead chipped like a egg; I've got pneumonia too, an' my guts is all out o' order. 'Taint no bloomin' picnic in those parts, I can tell you."

"Wot are the niggers like?" demanded a private.

"There's some prisoners in that train yonder. Go an' look at 'em. They're the aristocracy o' the country. The common folk are a dashed sight uglier. If you want to know what they fight with, reach under my seat an' pull out the long knife that's there."

They dragged out and beheld for the first time the grim, bone-handled, triangular Afghan knife. It was almost as long as Lew.

"That's the think to j'int ye," said the trooper, feebly. "It can take off a man's arm at the shoulder as easy as slicing butter. I halved the beggar that used that 'un, but there's more of his likes up above. They don't understand thrustin', but they're devils to slice."

The men strolled across the tracks to inspect the Afghan prisoners. They were unlike any "niggers" that the Fore and Aft had ever met—these huge, black-haired, scowling sons of the Beni-Israel. As the men stared the Afghans spat freely and muttered one to another with lowered eyes.

"My eyes! Wot awful swine!" said Jakin, who was in the rear of the procession. "Say, old man, how you got *puckrowed*, eh? *Kiswasti* you wasn't hanged for your ugly face, hey?"

The tallest of the company turned, his leg-irons clanking at the movement, and stared at the boy. "See!" he cried to his fellows in Pushto, "they send children against us. What a people, and what fools!"

"*Hya!*" said Jakin, nodding his head, cheerily. "You go down-country. *Khana* get, *peenikapanee* get—live like a bloomin' rajah *ke marfik*. That's a better *bandobust* than baynit get it in your innards. Good-by, old man. Take care o' your beautiful figure-'ed, an' try to look *kushy*."

The men laughed and fell in for their first march when they began to realize that a soldier's life was not all beer and skittles. They were much impressed with the size and bestial ferocity of the niggers whom they had now learned to call "Paythans," and more with the exceeding discomfort of their own surroundings. Twenty old soldiers in the corps would have taught them how to make themselves moderately snug at night, but they had no old soldiers, and, as the troops on the line of march said, "they lived like pigs." They learned the heart-breaking cussedness of camp-kitchens and camels and the depravity of an E. P. tent and a wither-wrung mule. They studied animalculæ in water, and developed a few cases of dysentery in their study.

At the end of their third march they were disagreeably surprised by the arrival in their camp of a hammered iron slug which, fired from a steady-rest at seven hundred yards, flicked out the brains of a private seated by the fire. This robbed them of their peace for a night, and was the beginning of a long-range fire carefully calculated to that end. In the daytime they saw nothing except an occasional puff of smoke from a crag above the line of march. At night there were distant spurts of flame and occasional casualties, which set the whole camp blazing into the gloom, and, occasionally, into opposite tents. Then they swore vehemently and vowed that this was magnificent but not war.

Indeed it was not. The regiment could not halt for reprisals against the *franctireurs* of the country-side. Its duty was to go forward and make connection with the Scotch

and Gurkha troops with which it was brigaded. The Afghans knew this, and knew too, after their first tentative shots, that they were dealing with a raw regiment. Thereafter they devoted themselves to the task of keeping the Fore and Aft on the strain. Not for anything would they have taken equal liberties with a seasoned corps—with the wicked little Gurkhas, whose delight it was to lie out in the open on a dark night and stalk their stalkers—with the terrible, big men dressed in women's clothes, who could be heard praying to their God in the night-watches, and whose peace of mind no amount of "sniping" could shake—or with those vile Sikhs, who marched so ostentatiously unprepared and who dealt out such grim reward to those who tried to profit by that unpreparedness. This white regiment was different—quite different. It slept like a hog, and, like a hog, charged in every direction when it was roused. Its sentries walked with a footfall that could be heard for a quarter of a mile; would fire at anything that moved—even a driven donkey—and when they had once fired, could be scientifically "rushed" and laid out a horror and an offense against the morning sun. Then there were camp-followers who straggled and could be cut up without fear. Their shrieks would disturb the white boys, and the loss of their services would inconvenience them sorely.

Thus, at every march, the hidden enemy became bolder and the regiment writhed and twisted under attacks it could not avenge. The crowning triumph was a sudden night rush ending in the cutting of many tent-ropes, the collapse of the canvas and a glorious knifing of the men who struggled and kicked below. It was a great deed, neatly carried out, and it shook the already shaken nerves of the Fore and Aft. All the courage that they had been required to exercise up to this point was the "two o'clock in the morning courage"; and they, so far, had only succeeded in shooting their comrades and losing their sleep.

Sullen, discontented, cold, savage, sick, with their uniforms dulled and unclean, the Fore and Aft joined their brigade.

"I hear you had a tough time of it coming up," said the brigadier. But when he saw the hospital-sheets his face fell. "This is bad," said he to himself. "They're as rotten as sheep." And aloud to the colonel, "I'm afraid we can't spare you just yet. We want all we have, else I should have given you ten days to recruit in."

The colonel winced. "On my honor, sir," he returned, "there is not the least necessity to think of sparing us. My men have been rather mauled and upset without a fair return. They only want to go in somewhere where they can see what's before them."

"Can't say I think much of the Fore and Aft," said the brigadier in confidence to his brigade-major. "They've lost all their soldiering, and, by the trim of them, might have marched through the country from the other side. A more fagged-out set of men I never put eyes on."

"Oh, they'll improve as the work goes on. The parade gloss has been rubbed off a little, but they'll put on field polish before long," said the brigade-major. "They've been mauled, and they don't quite understand it."

They did not. All the hitting was on one side, and it was cruelly hard hitting with accessories that made them sick. There was also the real sickness that laid hold of a strong man and dragged him howling to the grave. Worst of all, their officers knew just as little of the country as the men themselves, and looked as if they did. The Fore and Aft were in a thoroughly unsatisfactory condition, but they believed that all would be well if they once got a fair go-in at the enemy. Pot-shots up and down the valleys were unsatisfactory, and the bayonet never seemed to get a chance. Perhaps it was as well, for a long-limbed Afghan with a knife had a reach of eight feet, and could carry away enough lead to disable three Englishmen. The Fore and Aft would like some rifle practice at the enemy—all seven hundred rifles blazing together. That wish showed the mood of the men.

The Gurkhas walked into their camp, and in broken, bar-

rack-room English strove to fraternize with them; offered them pipes of tobacco and stood them treat at the canteen. But the Fore and Aft, not knowing much of the nature of the Gurkhas, treated them as they would treat any other "niggers," and the little men in green trotted back to their firm friends the Highlanders, and with many grins confided to them: "That dam white regiment no dam use. Sulky—ugh! Dirty—ugh! Hya, any tot for Johnny?" Whereat the Highlanders smote the Gurkhas as to the head, and told them not to vilify a British regiment, and the Gurkhas grinned cavernously, for the Highlanders were their elder brothers and entitled to the privileges of kinship. The common soldier who touches a Gurkha is more than likely to have his head sliced open.

Three days later the brigadier arranged a battle according to the rules of war and the peculiarity of the Afghan temperament. The enemy were massing in inconvenient strength among the hills, and the moving of many green standards warned him that the tribes were "up" in aid of the Afghan regular troops. A squadron and a half of Bengal lancers represented the available cavalry, and two screw guns borrowed from a column thirty miles away, the artillery at the general's disposal.

"If they stand, as I've a very strong notion that they will, I fancy we shall see an infantry fight that will be worth watching," said the brigadier. "We'll do it in style. Each regiment shall be played into action by its band, and we'll hold the cavalry in reserve."

"For *all* the reserve?" somebody asked.

"For all the reserve; because we're going to crumple them up," said the brigadier, who was an extraordinary brigadier, and did not believe in the value of a reserve when dealing with Asiatics. And, indeed, when you come to think of it, had the British army consistently waited for reserves in all its little affairs, the boundaries of our empire would have stopped at Brighton beach.

That battle was to be a glorious battle.

The three regiments debouching from three separate gorges, after duly crowning the heights above, were to converge from the center, left, and right upon what we will call the Afghan army, then stationed toward the lower extremity of a flat-bottomed valley. Thus it will be seen that three sides of the valley practically belonged to the English, while the fourth was strictly Afghan property. In the event of defeat the Afghans had the rocky hills to fly to, where the fire from the guerrilla tribes in aid would cover their retreat. In the event of victory these same tribes would rush down and lend their weight to the rout of the British.

The screw-guns were to shell the head of each Afghan rush that was made in close formation, and the cavalry, held in reserve in the right valley, were to gently stimulate the break-up which would follow on the combined attack. The brigadier, sitting upon a rock overlooking the valley, would watch the battle unrolled at his feet. The Fore and Aft would debouch from the central gorge, the Gurkhas from the left, and the Highlanders from the right, for the reason that the left flank of the enemy seemed as though it required the most hammering. It was not every day that an Afghan force would take ground in the open, and the brigadier was resolved to make the most of it.

"If we only had a few more men," he said plaintively, "we could surround the creatures and crumble 'em up thoroughly. As it is, I'm afraid we can only cut them up as they run. It's a great pity."

The Fore and Aft had enjoyed unbroken peace for five days, and were beginning, in spite of dysentery, to recover their nerve. But they were not happy, for they did not know the work in hand, and had they known, would not have known how to do it. Throughout those five days in which old soldiers might have taught them the craft of the game, they discussed together their misadventures in the past—how such a one was alive at dawn and dead ere the dusk, and with what shrieks and struggles such another had given up

his soul under the Afghan knife. Death was a new and horrible thing to the sons of mechanics who were used to die decently of zymotic disease; and their careful conservation in barracks had done nothing to make them look upon it with less dread.

Very early in the dawn the buglers began to blow, and the Fore and Aft, filled with a misguided enthusiasm, turned out without waiting for a cup of coffee and a biscuit; and were rewarded by being kept under arms in the cold while the other regiments leisurely prepared for the fray. All the world knows that it is ill taking the breeks off a Highlander. It is much iller to try to make him stir unless he is convinced of the necessity for haste.

The Fore and Aft waited, leaning upon their rifles and listening to the protests of their empty stomachs. The colonel did his best to remedy the default of lining as soon as it was borne in upon him that the affair would not begin at once, and so well did he succeed that the coffee was just ready when—the men moved off, their band leading. Even then there had been a mistake in time, and the Fore and Aft came out into the valley ten minutes before the proper hour. Their band wheeled to the right after reaching the open, and retired behind a little rocky knoll still playing while the regiment went past.

It was not a pleasant sight that opened on the uninstructed view, for the lower end of the valley appeared to be filled by an army in position—real and actual regiments attired in red coats, and—of this there was no doubt—firing Martini-Henri bullets which cut up the ground a hundred yards in front of the leading company. Over that pock-marked ground the regiment had to pass, and it opened the ball with a general and profound courtesy to the piping pickets; ducking in perfect time, as though it had been brazed on a rod. Being half capable of thinking for itself, it fired a volley by the simple process of pitching its rifle into its shoulder and pulling the trigger. The bullets may have accounted for some of the watchers on the hillside, but they certainly did not

affect the mass of enemy in front, while the noise of the rifles drowned any orders that might have been given.

"Good God!" said the brigadier, sitting on the rock high above all. "That regiment has spoiled the whole show. Hurry up the others, and let the screw-guns get off."

But the screw-guns, in working round the heights, had stumbled upon a wasp's nest of a small mud fort which they incontinently shelled at eight hundred yards, to the huge discomfort of the occupants, who were unaccustomed to weapons of such devilish precision.

The Fore and Aft continued to go forward, but with shortened stride. Where were the other regiments, and why did these niggers use Martinis? They took open order instinctively, lying down and firing at random, rushing a few paces forward and lying down again, according to the regulations. Once in this formation, each man felt himself desperately alone, and edged in toward his fellow for comfort's sake.

Then the crack of his neighbor's rifle at his ear led him to fire as rapidly as he could—again for the sake of the comfort of the noise. The reward was not long delayed. Five volleys plunged the files in banked smoke impenetrable to the eye, and the bullets began to take ground twenty or thirty yards in front of the firers, as the weight of the bayonet dragged down, and the right arms wearied with holding the kick of the leaping Martini. The company commanders peered helplessly through the smoke, the more nervous mechanically trying to fan it away with their helmets.

"High and to the left!" bawled a captain till he was hoarse. "No good! Cease firing, and let it drift away a bit."

Three or four times the bugles shrieked the order, and when it was obeyed the Fore and Aft looked that their foe should be lying before them in mown swaths of men. A light wind drove the smoke to leeward, and showed the enemy still in position and apparently unaffected. A quarter of a ton of lead had been buried a furlong in front of them, as the ragged earth attested.

That was not demoralizing. They were waiting for the mad riot to die down, and were firing quietly into the heart of the smoke. A private of the Fore and Aft spun up his company shrieking with agony, another was kicking the earth and gasping, and a third, ripped through the lower intestines by a jagged bullet, was calling aloud on his comrades to put him out of his pain. These were the casualties, and they were not soothing to hear or see. The smoke cleared to a dull haze.

Then the foe began to shout with a great shouting and a mass—a black mass—detached itself from the main body, and rolled over the ground at horrid speed. It was composed of, perhaps, three hundred men, who would shout and fire and slash, if the rush of their fifty comrades who were determined to die carried home. The fifty were Ghazis, half-maddened with drugs and wholly mad with religious fanaticism. When they rushed the British fire ceased, and in the lull the order was given to close ranks and meet them with the bayonet.

Any one who knew the business could have told the Fore and Aft that the only way of dealing with a Ghazi rush is by volleys at long ranges; because a man who means to die, who desires to die, who will gain heaven by dying, must, in nine cases out of ten, kill a man who has a lingering prejudice in favor of life if he can close with the latter. Where they should have closed and gone forward, the Fore and Aft opened out and skirmished, and where they should have opened out and fired, they closed and waited.

A man dragged from his blankets half awake and unfed is never in a pleasant frame of mind. Nor does his happiness increase when he watches the whites of the eyes of three hundred six-foot fiends upon whose beards the foam is lying, upon whose tongues is a roar of wrath, and in whose hands are three-foot knives.

The Fore and Aft heard the Gurkha bugles bringing that regiment forward at the double, while the neighing of the Highland pipes came from the left. They strove to stay

where they were, though the bayonets wavered down the line like the oars of a ragged boat. Then they felt body to body the amazing physical strength of their foes; a shriek of pain ended the rush, and the knives fell amid scenes not to be told. The men clubbed together and smote blindly—as often as not at their own fellows. Their front crumpled like paper, and the fifty Ghazis passed on; their backers, now drunk with success, fighting as madly as they.

Then the rear ranks were bidden to close up, and the subalterns dashed into the stew—alone. For the rear rank had heard the clamor in front, the yells and the howls of pain, and had seen the dark stale blood that makes afraid. They were not ging to stay. It was the rushing of the camps over again. Let their officers go to hell, if they chose; they would get away from the knives.

"Come on!" shrieked the subalterns, and their men, cursing them, drew back, each closing into his neighbor and wheeling round.

Charteris and Devlin, subalterns of the last company, faced their death alone in the belief that their men would follow.

"You've killed me, you cowards," sobbed Devlin and dropped, cut from the shoulder-strap to the center of the chest, and a fresh detachment of his men retreating, always retreating, trampled him under foot as they made for the pass whence they had emerged.

"I kissed her in the kitchen and I kissed her in the hall.
Child'un, child'un, follow me!
Oh, Golly, said the cook, is he gwine to kiss us all?
Halla—Halla—Halla Hallelujah!"

The Gurkhas were pouring through the left gorge and over the heights at the double to the invitation of their regimental quickstep. The black rocks were crowned with dark-green spiders as the bugles gave tongue jubilantly:

"In the morning! In the morning by the bright light!
When Gabriel blows his trumpet in the morning!"

The Gurkha rear companies tripped and blundered over loose stones. The front files halted for a moment to take stock of the valley and to settle stray boot-laces. Then a happy little sigh of contentment soughed down the ranks, and it was as though the land smiled, for behold there below was the enemy, and it was to meet them that the Gurkhas had doubled so hastily. There was much enemy. There would be amusement. The little men hitched their *kukris* well to hand, and gaped expectantly at their officers as terriers grin ere the stone is cast for them to fetch. The Gurkhas' ground sloped downward to the valley, and they enjoyed a fair view of the proceedings. They sat upon the bowlders to watch, for their officers were not going to waste their wind in assisting to repulse a Ghazi rush more than half a mile away. Let the white men look to their own front.

"Hi! yi!" said the Subadar major, who was sweating profusely. "Dam fools yonder, stand close-order! This is no time for close-order, it's the time for volleys. Ugh!" Horrified, amused, and indignant, the Gurkhas beheld the retirement—let us be gentle—of the Fore and Aft with a running chorus of oaths and commentaries.

"They run! The white men run! Colonel Sahib, may *we* also do a little running?" murmured Runbir Thappa, the senior Jemadar.

But the colonel would have none of it. "Let the beggars be cut up a little," said he, wrathfully. "Serves 'em right. They'll be prodded into facing round in a minute." He looked through his field-glasses and caught the glint of an officer's sword.

"Beating 'em with the flat—damned conscripts! How the Ghazis are walking into them!" said he.

The Fore and Aft, heading back, bore with them their officers. The narrowness of the pass forced the mob into solid formation, and the rear rank delivered some sort of a wavering volley. The Ghazis drew off, for they did not know what reserves the gorge might hide. Moreover, it was

never wise to chase white men too far. They returned as wolves return to cover, satisfied with the slaughter that they had done, and only stopping to slash at the wounded on the ground. A quarter of a mile had the Fore and Aft retreated, and now, jammed in the pass, was quivering with pain, shaken and demoralized with fear, while the officers, maddened beyond control, smote the men with the hilts and the flats of their swords.

"Get back! Get back, you cowards — you women! Right about face — column of companies, form — you hounds!" shouted the colonel, and the subalterns swore aloud. But the regiment wanted to go—to go anywhere out of the range of those merciless knives. It swayed to and fro irresolutely with shouts and outcries, while from the right the Gurkhas dropped volley after volley of cripple-stopper Snider bullets at long range into the mob of the Ghazis returning to their own troops.

The Fore and Aft band, though protected from direct fire by the rocky knoll under which it had sat down, fled at the first rush. Jakin and Lew would have fled also, but their short legs left them fifty yards in the rear, and by the time the band had mixed with the regiment they were painfully aware that they would have to close in alone and unsupported.

"Get back to that rock," gasped Jakin. "They won't see us there."

And they returned to the scattered instruments of the band; their hearts nearly bursting their ribs.

"Here's a nice show for *us*," said Jakin, throwing himself full length on the ground. "A bloomin' fine show for British infantry! Oh, the devils! They've gone an' left us alone here! Wot'll we do?"

Lew took possession of a cast-off water-bottle, which naturally was full of canteen rum, and drank till he coughed again.

"Drink," said he shortly. "They'll come back in a minute or two—you see."

Jakin drank, but there was no sign of the regiment's return. They could hear a dull clamor from the head of the valley of retreat, and saw the Ghazis slink back, quickening their pace as the Gurkhas fired at them.

"We're all that's left of the band, an' we'll be cut up as sure as death," said Jakin.

"I'll die game, then," said Lew thickly, fumbling with his tiny drummer's sword. The drink was working on his brain as it was on Jakin's.

" 'Old on! I know something better than fightin'," said Jakin, "stung by the splendor of a sudden thought" due chiefly to rum. "Tip our bloomin' cowards yonder the word to come back. The Paythan beggars are well away. Come on, Lew! We won't get hurt. Take the fife an' give me the drum. The Old Step for all your bloomin' guts are worth! There's a few of our men coming back now. Stand up, ye drunken little defaulter. By your right—quick march!"

He slipped the drum-sling over his shoulder, thrust the fife into Lew's hand, and the two boys marched out of the cover of the rock into the open, making a hideous hash of the first bars of the "British Grenadiers."

As Lew had said, a few of the Fore and Aft were coming back sullenly and shamefacedly under the stimulus of blows and abuse; their red coats shone at the head of the valley, and behind them were wavering bayonets. But between this shattered line and the enemy, who with Afghan suspicion feared that the hasty retreat meant an ambush, and had not moved therefore, lay half a mile of level ground dotted only by the wounded.

The tune settled into full swing and the boys kept shoulder to shoulder, Jakin banging the drum as one possessed. The one fife made a thin and pitiful squeaking, but the tune carried far, even to the Gurkhas.

"Come on, you dogs!" muttered Jakin to himself. "Are we to play forever?" Lew was staring straight in front of him and marching more stiffly than ever he had done on parade.

And, in bitter mockery of the distant mob, the old tune of the Old Line shrilled and rattled:

"Some talk of Alexander,
And some of Hercules;
Of Hector and Lysander,
And such great names as these!"

There was a far-off clapping of hands from the Gurkhas, and a roar from the Highlanders in the distance, but never a shot was fired by British or Afghan. The two little red dots moved forward in the open parallel to the enemy's front.

"But of all the world's great heroes
There's none that can compare
With a tow-row-row-row-row-row,
To the British Grenadier!"

The men of the Fore and Aft were gathering thick at the entrance into the plain. The brigadier on the heights far above was speechless with rage. Still no movement from the enemy. The day stayed to watch the children.

Jakin halted and beat the long roll of the assembly, while the fife squealed despairingly.

"Right about face! Hold up, Lew, you're drunk," said Jakin. They wheeled and marched back:

"Those heroes of antiquity
Ne'er saw a cannon-ball,
Nor knew the force o' powder,"

"Here they come!" said Jakin. "Go on, Lew":

"To scare their foes withal!"

The Fore and Aft were pouring out of the valley. What officers had said to men in that time of shame and humiliation will never be known; for neither officers nor men speak of it now.

"They are coming anew!" shouted a priest among the Afghans. "Do not kill the boys! Take them alive, and they shall be of our faith."

But the first volley had been fired, and Lew dropped on his face. Jakin stood for a minute, spun round and collapsed, as the Fore and Aft came forward, the maledictions of their officers in their ears and in their hearts the shame of open shame.

Half the men had seen the drummers die, and they made no sign. They did not even shout. They doubled out straight across the plain in open order, and they did not fire.

"This," said the Colonel of Gurkhas, softly, "is the real attack, as it ought to have been delivered. Come on, my children."

"Ulu-lu-lu-lu!" squealed the Gurkhas, and came down with a joyful clicking of *kukris* — those vicious Gurkha knives.

On the right there was no rush. The Highlanders, cannily commending their souls to God (for it matters as much to a dead man whether he has been shot in a border scuffle or at Waterloo), opened out and fired according to their custom, that is to say without heat and without intervals, while the screw-guns, having disposed of the impertinent mud fort aforementioned, dropped shell after shell into the clusters round the flickering green standards on the heights.

"Charging is an unfortunate necessity," murmured the color-sergeant of the right company of the Highlanders.

"It makes the men sweer so, but I am thinkin' that it will come to a charrge if these black devils stand much longer. Stewarrt, man, you're firing into the eye of the sun, and he'll not take any harm for government ammuneetion. A foot lower and a great deal slower! What are the English doing? They're very quiet there in the center. Running again?"

The English were not running. They were hacking and hewing and stabbing; for though one white man is seldom physically a match for an Afghan in a sheep-skin or wadded coat, yet, through the pressure of many white men behind, and a certain thirst for revenge in his heart, he becomes capable of doing much with both ends of his rifle. The Fore

and Aft held their fire till one bullet could drive through five or six men, and the front of the Afghan force gave on the volley. They then selected their men, and slew them with deep gasps and short hacking coughs, and groanings of leather belts against strained bodies, and realized for the first time that an Afghan attacked is far less formidable than an Afghan attacking; which fact old soldiers might have told them.

But they had no old soldiers in their ranks.

The Gurkhas' stall at the bazaar was the noisiest, for the men were engaged—to a nasty noise as of beef being cut on the block—with the *kukri*, which they preferred to the bayonet; well knowing how the Afghan hates the half-moon blade.

As the Afghans wavered, the green standards on the mountain moved down to assist them in a last rally. Which was unwise. The lancers chafing in the right gorge had thrice dispatched their only subaltern as galloper to report on the progress of affairs. On the third occasion he returned, with a bullet-graze on his knee, swearing strange oaths in Hindoostanee, and saying that all things were ready. So that squadron swung round the right of the Highlanders with a wicked whistling of wind in the pennons of its lances, and fell upon the remnant just when, according to all the rules of war, it should have waited for the foe to show more signs of wavering.

But it was a dainty charge, deftly delivered, and it ended by the cavalry finding itself at the head of the pass by which the Afghans intended to retreat; and down the track that the lances had made streamed two companies of the Highlanders, which was never intended by the brigadier. The new development was successful. It detached the enemy from his base as a sponge is torn from a rock, and left him ringed about with fire in that pitiless plain. And as a sponge is chased round the bath-tub by the hand of the bather, so were the Afghans chased till they broke into little detachments much more difficult to dispose of than large masses.

"See!" quoth the brigadier. "Everything has come as I arranged. We've cut their base, and now we'll bucket 'em to pieces."

A direct hammering was all that the brigadier had dared to hope for, considering the size of the force at his disposal; but men who stand or fall by the errors of their opponents may be forgiven for turning Chance into Design. The bucketing went forward merrily. The Afghan forces were upon the run—the run of wearied wolves who snarl and bite over their shoulders. The red lances dipped by twos and threes, and, with a shriek, up rose the lance butt, like a spar on a stormy sea, as the trooper cantering forward cleared his point. The lancers kept between their prey and the steep hills, for all who could were trying to escape from the valley of death. The Highlanders gave the fugitives two hundred yards' law, and then brought them down, gasping and choking ere they could reach the protection of the bowlders above. The Gurkhas followed suit; but the Fore and Aft were killing on their own account, for they had penned a mass of men between their bayonets and a wall of rock, and the flash of the rifles was lighting the wadded coats.

"We cannot hold them, Captain Sahib!" panted a ressaidar of lancers. "Let us try the carbine. The lance is good, but it wastes time."

They tried the carbine, and still the enemy melted away—fled up the hills by hundreds when there were only twenty bullets to stop them. On the heights the screw-guns ceased firing—they had run out of ammunition—and the brigadier groaned, for the musketry fire could not sufficiently smash the retreat. Long before the last volleys were fired, the litters were out in force looking for the wounded. The battle was over, and, but for want of fresh troops, the Afghans would have been wiped off the earth. As it was they counted their dead by hundreds, and nowhere were the dead thicker than in the track of the Fore and Aft.

But the regiment did not cheer with the Highlanders, nor did they dance uncouth dances with the Gurkhas among

the dead. They looked under their brows at the colonel as they leaned upon their rifles and panted.

"Get back to camp, you. Haven't you disgraced yourself enough for one day? Go and look to the wounded. It's all you're fit for," said the colonel. Yet for the past hour the Fore and Aft had been doing all that mortal commander could expect. They had lost heavily because they did not know how to set about their business with proper skill, but they had borne themselves gallantly, and this was their reward.

A young and sprightly color-sergeant, who had begun to imagine himself a hero, offered his water-bottle to a Highlander, whose tongue was black with thirst. "I drink with no cowards," answered the youngster, huskily, and, turning to a Gurkha, said, "Hya, Johnny! Drink water got it?" The Gurkha grinned and passed his bottle. The Fore and Aft said no word.

They went back to camp when the field of strife had been a little mopped up and made presentable, and the brigadier, who saw himself a knight in three months, was the only soul who was complimentary to them. The colonel was heart-broken and the officers were savage and sullen.

"Well," said the brigadier, "they are young troops of course, and it was not unnatural that they should retire in disorder for a bit."

"Oh, my only Aunt Maria!" murmured a junior staff officer. "Retire in disorder! It was a bully run!"

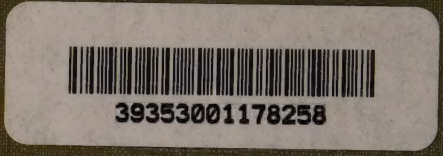
"But they came again as we all know," cooed the brigadier, the colonel's ashy-white face before him, "and they behaved as well as could possibly be expected. Behaved beautifully, indeed. I was watching them. It's not a matter to take to heart, colonel. As some German general said of his men, they wanted to be shooted over a little, that was all." To himself he said: "Now they're blooded I can give 'em responsible work. It's as well that they got what they did. Teach 'em more than half a dozen rifle flirtations, that will—later—run alone and bite. Poor old colonel, though."

All that afternoon the heliograph winked and flickered on the hills, striving to tell the good news to a mountain forty miles away. And in the evening there arrived, dusty, sweating, and sore, a misguided correspondent who had gone out to assist at a trumpery village-burning and who had read off the message from afar, cursing his luck the while.

"Let's have the details somehow—as full as ever you can, please. It's the first time I've ever been left this campaign," said the correspondent to the brigadier; and the brigadier, nothing loth, told him how an army of communication had been crumpled up, destroyed, and all but annihilated by the craft, strategy, wisdom, and foresight of the brigadier.

But some say, and among these be the Gurkhas who watched on the hillside, that that battle was won by Jakin and Lew, whose little bodies were borne up just in time to fit two gaps at the head of the big ditch-grave for the dead under the heights of Jagai.

THE END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